

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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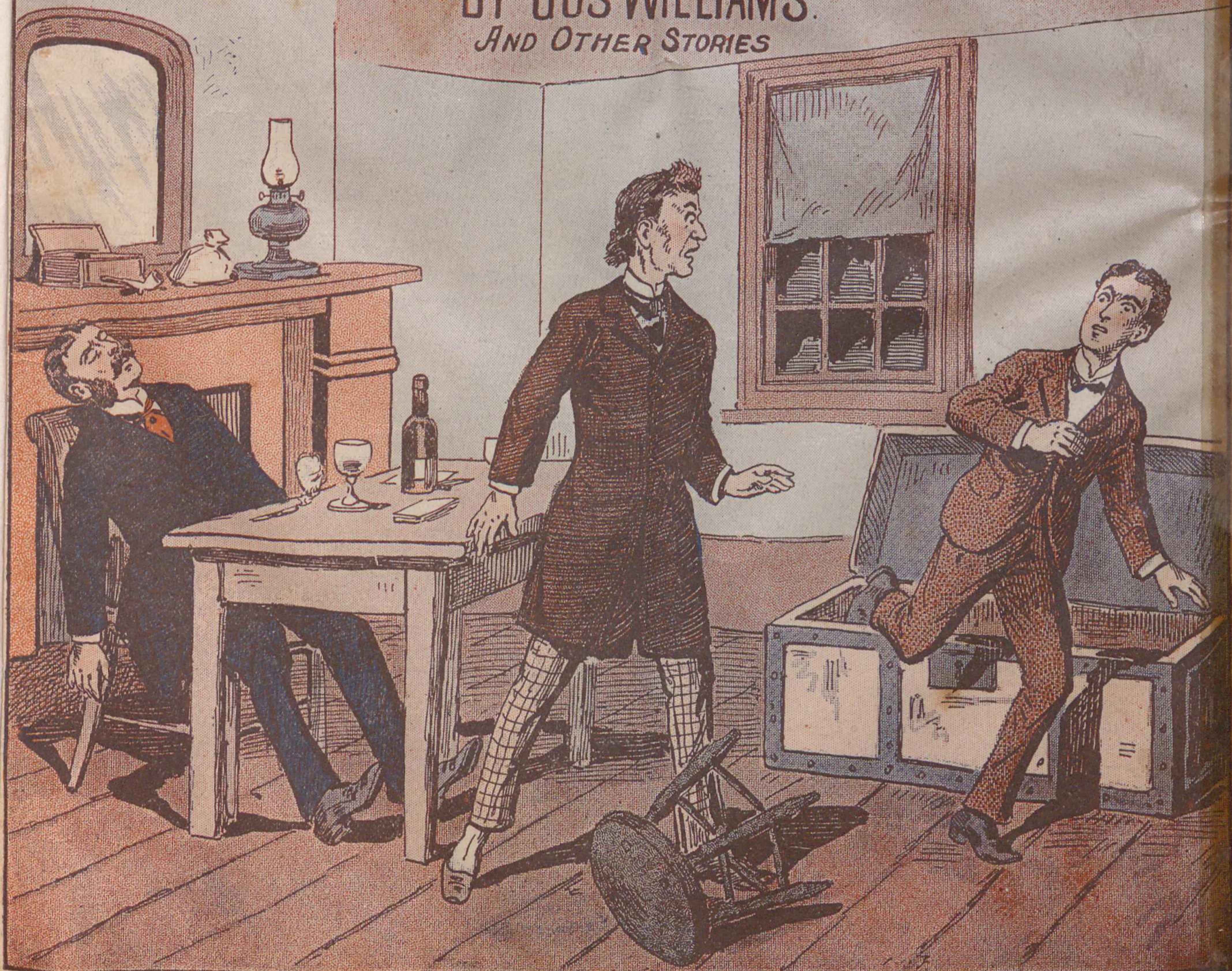
Price 5 Cents.

RODDY THE CALL BOY; OR

BORN TO BE AN ACTOR.

BY GUS WILLIAMS.

AND OTHER STORIES



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Stories of Adventure

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RODDY THE CALL BOY

— OR —

BORN TO BE AN ACTOR

By GUS WILLIAMS

CHAPTER I.

STUDYING TO BECOME AN ACTOR.

It was a cold and blustery New Year's eve in the year 1875.

The streets of New York were veiled in a blinding snow-storm, a raw and biting wind was shrieking over the housetops, people and vehicles came and went like shadowy phantoms through the mist of whirling flakes, and the chimes of Trinity Church boomed eleven dull clangs.

Snow on the ground, snow in the air, snow on the houses and trees, and snow upon everything. Indeed, it was a veritable old-fashioned snow-storm.

At least that is what Roderick Random said to his old Italian teacher, as he peered out the window of the high tenement in which Signor Pippo Ravelli had his quarters, in a densely populated locality in Cherry street.

The room in which they were was rather comfortably furnished for such an impoverished mortal as the old teacher of elocution and acting, and seemed to suggest that the professor had once had better days.

A bright lamplight glowed upon the table, showing that the furniture was in a good state of preservation, a cosy fire was burning ruddily in the stove, beside which the signor sat, and there was a good ingrain carpet on the floor.

Roddy had been wrapped up in grave thought, and now turned toward the little old professor, who was conning over an acting edition of the *Gladiator*, which the boy had been studying under his tuition.

The young student of Thespia was a quiet-looking chap of seventeen, but had the appearance of being at least three years older.

His figure was tall and well built, and although his clothing was threadbare and scarcely fit to wear, it was clean and neat in every respect.

A mass of dark-brown ringlets clustered upon his shapely head, beneath which shone an intelligent white forehead. The contour of his features was of the aquiline type, and there flashed a pair of brown eyes under his straight brows, in which burned an unmistakable fire of ambitious resolution.

Yet above it all, the only sorrow of any account in the boy's life had left its mark upon his face, in the form of a melancholy expression, which sometimes settled down even in the midst of his happiest moments.

Pippo roused himself from his meditation over the play, as Roddy turned toward him, and rising from his seat beside the stove, he said in hoarse tones:

"Per Bacco! Youa was born to be an actor!"

"Why do you think so, Pippo?" queried the boy, with a sad smile.

"Who coulda giva de lines of dis play better dan youa just recita? But now fora de odders. Youa makit de study 'De Honeymoon,' 'Found in a Four-Wheeler,' and 'Julius Cæsar'? Ifa you know it some of de parts, cleara de stage an' git it ready."

"I took the part of the Duke of Aranza in the first——"
"Yes, yes. Joe Capize, second low comedy, in de second——"

"Marcus Brutus in the third play—a tragic role."

"Carissima! An' youa know it act first, scene first, of 'De Honeymoon'?"

"I have all the plays down fine. The one you mention shows a street scene in Madrid. Enter Duke and Montalban, left, followed by servant, crosses behind to right, speaking to servant—but shall I spout, Pippo?"

"Giva me de first lines. Buta be careful—careful of de inflections!"

Roddy nodded, threw himself into the character he was assuming and began:

"This letter you will give my steward—this to my old tenant, Lopez. Use dispatch, sir; your negligence may ruin an affair which I have much at heart. (The servant exits here, don't he, Pippo?) Why, how now, count?"

"No, no!" cried the little old professor, running his hands wildly through his gray hair and making it stand on end. "Raisa de voice more, Roddy, dis way. Why! How now, count? Dat makit de line shaded better."

Roddy nodded and repeated the words with a different accent, then continued the rest of the duke's role.

Ravelli had his whole heart and soul wrapped up in his elocution and acting, and was sure that Roddy would some day make him famous, for the boy undoubtedly possessed a wonderful capability for acting.

He lived in the same house as Ravelli, with a played-out actor, by the name of Bradford H. Bull, who posed as his stepfather. This individual was a very eccentric character, strongly addicted to drink and brutality, and when in his cups beat Roddy unmercifully, with the least provocation, and spent all the earnings of the boy, who was a call-boy in the Olympic Theater, for beer and liquor. It was after his nightly return from the theater that Roddy took his gratis lessons from the old Italian who had befriended him, and that is how we find him there that cold New Year's eve.

Roddy never learned much of Ravelli's history. The Italian lived in the tenement when Bull moved in. He gave lessons to aspirants to Thespian fame, at which he gained a meager living and usually went out in the evening, returning punctually at ten o'clock, and never confided in anybody.

Roddy found a sympathetic consoler in Ravelli when he told him his story. Bull was his stepfather, had given him the advantage of an education, and at the age of fourteen secured him the place of call-boy in the theater in which he was then employed.

"But whata he doing for to live?" asked Pippo, curiously.

"Nothing," said Roddy. "He believes the less work he does the better off he will be. Besides, he finds it cheaper to be kicked out of his apartments than pay the rent. There are times when he gets very hard up. Then he casts around the theaters to pick up a job, acting as substitute for some actor."

The rest of his time is spent loafing around beer saloons, playing cards, throwing dice, getting drunk, and coming home to thrash me. Every pay night he comes prowling around the stage-door, waiting to pounce down upon half of my wages—the little money he leaves me being all I have to live upon. But there is one day each year when he disappears, and I do not see anything of him for some time."

"Whena dat day coma?" queried Pippo.

"Always on New Year's day. Once a year he comes into possession of five hundred dollars, but where he gets it is a mystery to me. That means a grand spree for him of uncertain duration. He don't come back until the last cent is gone. That is the only time I have any luck, for I can keep all of my wages and have plenty to eat. Ah, Pippo, I have a hard time of it."

"Sancta Maria! dat is funny abouta de money," mused Pippo.

"It always struck me as being queer. I'll run away from the old wretch some time, as I'm getting tired of his abuse."

The boy never referred to his past after that, but endured his hardships in silence.

The acting went on in the little old Italian's room until near twelve o'clock, when they were both startled by hearing footsteps ascending the stairs about which there could be no mistake. These sounds were accompanied by a good deal of profanity and grumbling.

Mr. Bradford H. Bull was returning home, and it was evident that he was accompanied by another person. Just as Roddy ended with

"I'm ashamed to try your patience, sir; but women, like watches, must be set with care to make them go well," when there came the sound of a scrambling just outside of Pippo's door, followed by a terrific bang, much as if somebody had tripped on the stairs and had fallen upon the landing.

"Oh!" roared the voice of Bradford H. Bull the next moment.

"Dear me, what has happened. Very awkward, I'm sure. Did you fall?" came another voice, in the low tones of a softly modulated and aristocratic voice.

"Confound it, Morris Harcastle, I've broken my nose."

"Then why do you not have a light in this disgusting hall? Why, sir, the stench alone is enough to knock a nigger down, without mentioning a man hitting his toes on these rickety stairs. But proceed, sir; proceed to your rooms."

Roddy paused and glanced askance at Pippo, wondering who this nice-spoken personage could be whom the delectable Mr. Bull was bringing home.

"Then follow me," said Mr. Bull's voice. "One more flight, sir."

"Heavens!" groaned the other. "It is really more than a fellow can endure, you know. You poverty-stricken people ought to have better accommodations, upon my word. Positively, I don't know how I endure this—pah!"

He ended his remark with an exclamation of disgust, and then Roddy heard their footsteps receding from the hall and ascending the other flight of stairs, evidently on their way to Mr. Bull's rooms.

"Ave Maria!" whispered Pippo, with a serious look. "De beast he coma home."

"I wonder who he has brought with him?" muttered Roddy in surprise.

The signor shrugged his shoulders, a peculiar smile hovering over his smooth face, and a knowing twinkle in his black eyes, as he replied:

"Mebbe he bringa de mana play poker. He always makit de gamble."

"It is hard to guess," muttered Roddy, entirely forgetting his acting. "The voice of that fellow sounded strangely familiar to me, Pippo. I have heard it before. But I can soon find out who he is by following them."

"You go up-stairs now?"

"Yes. If I am not in, and he wants me, I will get a beating."

"Den go. You coma in to-morrow sure, to finish de 'Glad-iator'?"

"Certainly. I want to get the stage business perfect in that piece, for they are going to give it in the Olympic next week with Gilbert in the title role, and Jerry Wildrake, the stage manager, likes me to know the entrances."

As he finished speaking, he bade his old friend good-night, and passed out into the dark hall. Groping his way to the staircase, he softly ascended the stairs to the next floor, and saw a light blazing in the kitchen window. Nearing the door, he heard his father uncorking a bottle and chuckling immoderately over his opinion of the brandy it contained. Then

Roddy stole through the hall and softly entered the front room, which was used by his father as a sleeping apartment.

The door between the rooms was open, and as he glanced through he saw Mr. Bull take up the lamp and walk toward him, telling his companion to follow him into the front room with the bottle and glasses.

Suddenly stricken with consternation, as he did not want to be found there, because his father certainly would quarrel with him for not having made his presence in there known, Roddy turned to fly.

"But no," he muttered, as his glance fell upon a huge trunk between the windows in which his father kept some theatrical costumes. "I'll get into this trunk, and discover what they are up to. If I don't, and he is playing any tricks, he will take mighty good care to get me out of the way by sending me off somewhere when I make my presene here known to him."

And without losing an instant, as his father was dangerously near now, he quickly lifted the lid of the big trunk, got in and closed down the cover.

No sooner was this done, when the rays of the light Bradford Bull carried cut into the room and fell upon the trunk.

The light illuminated the room throughout, and showed up the ugly crevices in the bare, dirty floor. The walls were yellow, cracked and broken in places, the apertures showing the skeleton ribs of the laths beneath.

A sheetless and dirty bed, a wooden table, three broken chairs, the trunk, and a rag, half covering one of the windows, was about all the room contained.

The ceiling was very low, and sloped down at the front of the room, with the windows breast high and built out in two apertures through the roof.

Mr. Bull set his lamp upon the dusty mateliece, shut one eye, and turned the wick a little higher, just as his companion gingerly entered the room.

The played-out actor was not an Adonis to look upon, for his feet were too big, and his legs, incased in a pair of tight gray pants, were too skinny and knock-kneed. Besides, he was narrow-shouldered, chicken-breasted and long-armed. He had on a rusty-looking frock coat, buttoned very tightly across his chest, which made the tails stick out like a ballet dancer's dress, and his long, thin neck was incased in a paper collar of his own manufacture, encircled by a portable black cravat of ancient origin.

Hair was very scarce on top of his head, and the fringe that encircled the back was as red as fire and so stiff that it stuck straight out.

His face was long, narrow and cadaverous, his bulging eyes a watery green, and his long, thin nose and big ears as red as his eyebrows, which comprised all the hair there was upon his angular physiognomy.

In his hand he carried a rusty stove-pipe hat with a band of crape around it, and protruding from within this headgear were a pair of time-worn gloves.

All in all, Mr. Bradford H. Bull was a fine specimen of these shabby, genteel barroom bummers, who want to keep up an appearance of respectability, which their faces give away as a cold failure. The company in which Mr. Bull found himself seemed to Roddy, who was peering out through the crack he made by slightly raising the lid of the trunk, to be a shade more delectable.

He was a man in the prime of life, was well built, handsomely attired in the height of fashion, and had dark hair, a black mustache, and a pair of glossy, curling side-whiskers. In short, he was to all appearances a very high-toned individual, and seemed to be suspicious of everything upon which his dark eyes rested, in their uneasy, nervous roving from one object to another.

He set the bottle of brandy upon the table just as Mr. Bull, having arranged the light to his satisfaction, locked the doors, and drew two chairs up to the table with the remark in a somewhat nasal tone of voice:

"There now, Morris Harcastle, we are fixed so that we can converse here without fear of interruption, except by the invitations of that bottle of very good brandy which you had the goodness to provide for the occasion."

They both sat down, then Mr. Harcastle said:

"Are you quite positive, my dear Bull, that we will have no interruption?"

"By the gods, sir. The boy is away somewhere, and no one can get in here."

"Very well. Then I will tell you why, instead of sending you the five hundred dollars I always remitted for Roderick Random's keep, I came to see you myself about the boy. And now prepare yourself for a most shocking surprise."

CHAPTER II.

A DISCLOSURE OF CRIME.

"So!" thought Roddy, inside of the trunk, "it is from this Mr. Morris Hardcastle that father got his yearly five hundred dollars, eh? But what does this fastidious stranger mean by saying he paid the money to Bradford Bull for keeping me? There is some mystery here, I suspect."

The idea of a shocking surprise made Bradford Bull jump. He glanced at his companion with an uneasy expression, his bony hand convulsively grasped the neck of the brandy bottle, and he said hurriedly:

"What do you mean by that, Mr. Hardcastle?"

"Oh," replied the other; "positively, you look scared, Bull."

"Am I not going to receive the money as usual?"

"No," was the calm response, as Hardcastle drew out a cigar and lit it.

Mr. Bull started again, a blank look of dismay crossing his red face.

"Before we go any further," said he, in choking tones, as he gulped down a lump that seemed to rise in his throat, "let us sample this cognac, which I see is labeled with the brand of a fine old vintage, Mr. Hardcastle."

"Help yourself," replied the other, nodding his head.

He cast a furtive, calculating glance at the actor, as with trembling hands he pulled the cork out of the bottle and poured a liberal potion into a glass.

"Your very good health, Mr. Hardcastle," said Bull, raising his glass.

"Drink," responded the other, nodding again.

Mr. Bull required no second bidding to pour the fiery liquor down his throat. Then he smacked his lips, looked intensely satisfied and uttered a sigh of relief.

"Now, then," said he, "I am ready to hear what you have to say, sir."

"Good. To commence at the beginning then: Is the boy still with you?"

"He is, and a fine-looking fellow he has grown to be under my tender care."

"And he still believes you are his stepfather?"

"Of course. How could he think otherwise?"

"Well, Bull, the time has come when I must alter my plans."

"Alter your plans? Why, what is the matter?"

"His mother is giving me a good deal of trouble."

"Ha!" said Mr. Bull, grasping the bottle again.

"My mother?" muttered Roddy, with a violent start. "And he is not my stepfather!"

"Yes," continued Hardcastle. "She does not believe he is dead."

"What has she been doing?" queried Bull, uneasily.

"She has agents looking all over for him."

"That is too bad, sir. But still they would never dream of looking for him here."

"The deuce! How can I tell? Positively, it makes me so uneasy I can scarcely sleep. If the boy is discovered I will go to jail."

"And I," said Bull, with a frightened glance around the dirty room.

"You will positively go with me."

"Ha!" said Bull again, and in a twinkling he poured another drink into his glass. "This is horrible. I am unnerved. A little stimulant, Mr. Hardcastle, will not come amiss. Here's to your very good health, sir."

And before Mr. Hardcastle could reply he swallowed the brandy and filled his glass again.

"Therefore," said the fastidious gentleman, "while we have time to save ourselves let us take advantage of it. Really, Bull, I am quite alarmed."

"But, Mr. Hardcastle, sir, what can we do about it?"

"Do! Why, take active measures at once. What is five hundred a year to you in comparison with your freedom from prison? Positively nothing."

"That is what I say—just exactly my sentiments, Mr. Hardcastle, sir."

"Then let us put the boy out of the way so that he will never be found again."

"Eh?" demanded the actor, with a violent start, as his weary eyes began to bulge.

"That boy stands in my way to a fortune. He can be the means of sending both of us to jail. Will you hesitate to save yourself? Will you hesitate to acquire a big reward—say five thousand dollars—by silencing him forever?"

"Can it be possible you mean—you mean to kill the boy?"

"Hush, not so loud!" replied the other, raising his hand, and

casting his suspicious glance around the murky room. "I do not say that! Positively you seem to lay the utmost stress upon what I wish to convey, Bull. I say that the boy must be gotten out of our way most effectually. That is pretty plain—isn't it? I do not stipulate what means are employed, so long as the job is done to the letter. You can accomplish it in any manner you choose."

"Me?" echoed Bull, in startled tones, as if that fact had only just occurred to him.

"You? Yes, of course, you! Who else, I'd like to know."

This appeared to be too much for Mr. Bull's weakened nerves to stand.

Up went his glass again, and down his throat went its contents.

"Are you willing to undertake the job for the price I stipulated?"

"Your question is so sudden. I have had no time for reflection."

"Bah! Answer me. Why hesitate? The case is urgent and as much in your favor as my own. Besides, you have no reliance except upon the annual five hundred I always gave you. This is a golden opportunity you may never again have as long as you live. Just think. At this moment you are penniless, and have no chance to make a dollar. Now see here."

He drew a wallet from his pocket, and displayed a huge roll of bank-notes. It made Mr. Bull's watery eyes glitter with avaricious longing.

"How much money have you got there?" he asked eagerly.

"Ten thousand dollars. One-half of it is yours, if you close the bargain."

"Why don't you tell me the true inwardness of Roderick Random's case?"

"I will, if it will be any satisfaction to you to know it."

"Proceed, then, Mr. Hardcastle. I am all attention."

"Very well. And when you have heard all, really you cannot help accepting the job I proposed. As you know, I made a bargain with you, twelve years ago, to assume the guardianship of a five-year-old boy, whom you have since cared for at a remuneration of five hundred dollars per year. That boy was the son of my sister's husband by a former marriage. My sister cared as much for the child as if it was her own. Unfortunately, though, when her husband died, she was taken sick, and since then has been a confirmed invalid. Half of her husband's fortune of half a million was bequeathed to her, and I was made guardian of the other half, to save it for Roger Random's son. He would get it when he came of age. My design was to secure that money for myself, through the instrumentality of my own son, by letting him impersonate Roderick Random."

"A good plan, by the gods!" chuckled Bull, admiringly.

"Much better than you imagine," replied Mr. Hardcastle. "Nobody was aware that I was secretly married, and had a son by my wife, who years ago died. Hence, my son's identity was lost to the world. When my sister was taken sick she asked me to take little Roddy to a competent person to bring up. I brought him to you, and substituted my own son in care of a respectable family by the name of Wildrake."

"Jerry Wildrake?" queried Bull, with suddenly aroused interest.

"Yes. The family was poor, but of late years Jerry Wildrake secured a lucrative position as stage manager of the Olympic Theater."

"Yes—I am acquainted with him. But go on, Mr. Hardcastle."

"I did not let my sister know who had charge of my son, of course, and recently brought the boy to her and tried to palm him off on her as her dead husband's child. Unfortunately, though, the boy was the living image of me. My sister discovered the deception instantly, and accused me of trying to cheat her. I denied it, and brought my boy away again. Then I told her Roderick had died, as I feared she would get me into trouble. She did not believe it and had a search for Roderick made at once. She and I do not love each other much, you may depend, but for appearance sake she is obliged to sustain me, for she lives in very grand style in a fashionable quarter of this city. I told her that she was mistaken, and did my utmost to dissuade her of the idea that I was cheating her, but all to no purpose."

"And if she discovers that I am mixed up in your plot?" gasped Bull.

"You, as well as I, as I said before, will go to jail, for she is merciless."

"Then the best thing we can do is to get the boy out of the way."

"Positively—and without delay."

"But we need not murder him."

"I did not stipulate that there should be any bloodshed."

"We can ship him off to some foreign country, or on a long whaling cruise."

"Just the plan. Really, Bull, you are a volatile fellow."

"Very," said Mr. Bull, with a self-conscious nod.

Mr. Bull excused himself, took up both glasses and left the room, returning shortly with evidently clean tumblers, but one of them had knockout drops at the bottom. Then he filled both glasses and they took a drink.

Roddy was peering out at them, feeling decidedly uneasy.

Then suddenly Morris Hardcastle uttered a suppressed groan, started half-way up from his chair, his eyes opening wide with a horrified expression, then he sank back in his seat utterly unconscious, and a loud laugh pealed from Bradford Bull's thin lips.

He seized Hardcastle's wallet, and sprang to his feet, thrusting it into his pocket.

"Great heavens!" muttered Roddy. "Has he poisoned the man to rob him?"

It looked so, and the startled and horrified boy nearly fainted from terror.

"Drugged!" cried the actor. "That money was too much for me, and I was lucky enough to have the potion in my pocket, which I put in the water he drank with his brandy. And now to get him out of the way. I will send him to sea with my friend Hanks, on a long whaling cruise, and this is just the thing to ship him in."

Then, to Roddy's inexpressible horror, Bradford approached the trunk.

But before he could open it, Roddy threw up the lid and sprang out.

Bull recoiled, uttering a yell of affright, and the boy rushed to the door, unlocked it, and dashed out into the hall.

"Discovered!" yelled Bull, in accents of impotent rage, as he rushed after the boy.

But Roddy made good his escape to the street, and Bradford returned to the room.

Imagining that the actor had murdered Hardcastle, Roddy procured a policeman, and hurried back to the room with him. But when they arrived there, ten minutes later, nothing was to be seen of Bull or the unfortunate wretch who had taken the deadly drug. The trunk was also gone, having been taken to an undertaking store at the Five Points. This was run by a man named Denny Fagin, an old crook and friend of Bull.

It was two days later, and Roddy had been living in a lodging-house, Mr. Bull having vanished from his apartments.

After the performance in the evening, Roddy took a walk, going down towards the river, and shortly reaching it.

But few people were in the street, and the ships and rigging at the docks were covered by a coating of frozen blocks of ice. When he reached South street, he paused, with the intention of retracing his steps and going to the wretched lodging-house in which he now had taken up his quarters.

On the corner was a liquor store, which was chiefly patronized by the longshoremen and sailors from the near-by vessels at the docks.

The side door of the saloon opened, and Roddy saw a burly man, clad in blue flannel and a felt hat, emerge with another individual, who carried a whip and had the appearance of being a driver.

They were engaged in conversation as they came out of the saloon, and as Roddy was about to pass on, his attention was suddenly arrested by the first words he heard the rough-looking man with the whip utter.

"O'll fetch ther thrunk down ter-night, Captain Hanks!" said he.

"Keel haul me!" growled the man in blue, savagely, as he darted a quick glance at Roddy, teeming with suspicion and fear. "Can't yer stow yer jawin' tackle when yer a-sailin' three sheets in the wind? I never clapped eyes on a more careless lubber! Might's well publish yer business."

They walked on down South street toward East Houston, and passed out of Roddy's hearing, the sailor gazing back once or twice to see if the boy had paid any attention to what they were talking about.

Roddy remained perfectly unconcerned as to outward appearance, but his mind was suddenly thrown into a tumult of agitation over the words which had reached his ears.

"By jingo!" he muttered, "this is queer. That man Hanks must be the very sea captain on whose vessel Bradford Bull wanted to ship the trunk, with Morris Hardcastle's body in it! Moreover, it must be that the fellow with the whip has been hired to transfer the trunk from its present location to the

ship, and they must have been making their arrangements about it in that saloon. It seems to me I've met that rough man before."

He waited until the two men were fully a block ahead of him, and then he edged after them.

The men did not trouble themselves any more about the boy, after they had gone a few blocks, so Roddy went after them, at a safe distance, with the utmost assurance. They walked on several blocks, until near the foot of Grand street, where the bend in the river occurs with its frightfully swift currents, and then they separated after shaking hands.

There was a large bark moored at the bulkhead, to the stern of which a gang-plank rose from the anchorage of the dock.

The captain crossed upon the gang-plank, and walking across the deck, disappeared into the cabin. Upon the stern of the vessel was the name

THE RANDOM LASS.

As the boy stood watching the sailor, he did not see Bradford Bull suddenly come around a corner; but the moment the actor's glance fell upon the boy he dodged into a hallway, and kept a sharp watch upon his actions.

Roddy started as his eyes rested upon the name of the vessel, and he muttered:

"Why, how odd that the ship should bear the name of Random! That is my own name. I wonder if Roger Random, my father, ever had anything to do with the vessel? It would be queer if he did."

Roddy hung around for a while and then walked away up the street.

Just as the boy arrived abreast of a coach, standing near the curb, they sprang upon him, a handkerchief was clapped to his nostrils saturated with chloroform, and the next instant the men lifted his unconscious form into the coach and the vehicle dashed away.

Roddy did not remain unconscious very long, as the drug had not wholly overpowered him. He suspected the moment he was attacked what was in store for him, and held his breath as soon as he felt the linen thrust under his nostrils.

Presently the coach paused at the bulkhead beside The Random Lass, the driver alighted, opened the door, and the two men got out, carrying the limp form of the call-boy between them toward the gang-plank. They went on board with all haste to escape the observations of any policeman who might be patrolling that beat, and have his suspicions aroused.

There were a couple of dark visaged sailors on watch on the deck, but they paid no attention to what was transpiring beyond a single curious stare.

"Any one come on board?" queried one of Roddy's captors, who proved to be Hanks, pausing an instant.

"Von man mit de drunk," replied the Danish foremast hand spoken to.

"What did you do with the trunk?" demanded the captain.

"Stowdt it forrard, sir, in de fo'castle."

"And where is the man?"

"In de cabin aft, sir."

"Good. Heave ahead, Fagin."

They carried Roddy to the small cabin, wherein Bradford Bull sat beside a table, and laid the limp young figure upon the lounge.

"Ah," said Mr. Bull, hastily arising. "You've got him, eh?"

"Safe as a rivet," replied the captain, while Denny sat down.

"What disposition will you make of him. I mean, until you sail?"

"Stow him below the fo'castle, with the other who's in the trunk."

A sailor was called in, and between him and Denny the boy was carried across the deck and down the companionway into the forecastle. None of the men were in there, as they would not all come on board until the following morning early, but a ship's lantern swung from a beam overhead, lighting up the dark and dirty place, and showed Denny the huge trunk in which Morris Hardcastle laid in an unconscious state, just as he had been brought from Denny's resort. Several large holes had been cut in the trunk so that the man could have plenty of air, and as no sound was to be heard he must have been still senseless from the drug given to him that day by Mr. Bull.

Laying Roddy down upon a bunk, the sailor went upon deck again, and left Denny down in the forecastle, peeping into the trunk through one of the holes. Fagin was told to lock the companionway door when he came out so that Roddy could not get away when he returned to consciousness.

They key had been left in the lock of the trunk by Bull, so that the captain could release Hardcastle when the vessel was

at sea, and as Mr. Fagin was curious to see who Bull's prisoner was, he bent over the trunk to open it.

Now was Roddy's chance to make a dash for liberty.

He softly slipped out of the bunk, as Fagin's back was turned on him, and picked up a wooden marline spike from the dirty mattress he had been lying on. Fagin was so intent upon his inquisitive work that he did not notice the shadow of the boy, which was thrown before his eyes.

Roddy's face was as pale as death, for he knew that should he fail in his endeavor to get the best of Fagin, the wretch might kill him outright. When he got close to Fagin he raised the marline spike.

Down it came with a thud upon the rascal's head the next moment.

Uttering a groan, Fagin fell to the floor utterly insensible.

The boy stooped over him and gazed in his face.

It was as pallid as death. His eyes were closed, but he breathed naturally.

The next instant Roddy unlocked the trunk, dragged the insensible Harcastle out of it and thrust him under the bunks.

Then he managed to work Fagin into the trunk, closed the lid down, locked it, and dropping the key into his pocket, he glided toward the companionway stairs, muttering triumphantly:

"There! I've turned the tables on him, and both he and Harcastle will go to sea and not trouble me again for two years, at least. And now to escape from this vessel unseen."

Up the stairs he went, and a moment later he crept out on the deck.

CHAPTER III.

AS SEEN THROUGH THE WINDOW.

Roddy reached the deck filled with delight, and bolted the companionway door, for he knew well that unless some unforeseen accident occurred both Fagin and Harcastle would be carried away to sea, and would not be able to molest him again. He only regretted that he was unable to send Bradford Bull along with them; but that was out of the question.

Of course, if Harcastle was taken out of the country Bull would have no fear of a betrayal by Roddy of his robbery; but the boy had no desire to keep the actor in his power. On the contrary, as soon as Bull was sure that the boy could do him no injury, he might cease his persecutions, and that was just what Roddy wanted.

The snowstorm had increased when he reached the deck, and through the veil of falling flakes he could see the two sailors standing at the stern of the boat, where the gang-plank rested.

It would be too dangerous to attempt to pass them, so the boy went back on his hands and knees, and crept across the deck like a veritable shadow, until he got to the bulwarks on the port side.

Here everything was in darkness.

The distance from the ship to the string-piece of the bulkhead was fully ten feet, several floating log bumpers holding the vessel off.

Luckily, though, the tide had been rising, raising the ship's rail high above the dock and making up his mind to risk a jump, Roddy caught hold of the foremost shrouds, swung himself up on the bulwark and leaped with all his agility and strength.

He landed squarely on his feet just across the string-piece, making but very little noise, and the next moment he sped away through the storm, thrilled with happiness over his escape.

He did not pause until he was several blocks from the river. Then feeling perfectly secure he moderated his pace and walked along toward the Bowery in a more tranquil frame of mind.

"Well," he muttered, "I'm safe at last. I only hope that this is the end of Bradford Bull's persecutions! He was bad enough without hiring those other two rascals. Another thing is lucky for me just now, and that was the fact of Mr. D——'s recovery, as his letter to-night to old Wildrake said, so Bull will not be needed at the theater any longer to fill his role of Julius Cæsar. Next week a variety show goes on, and after that another drama. Waldrake said he'd raise my wages, too, and as I won't have Bull to drink up all my money, I guess I'll be able to get along all right now if he only leaves me alone. Another thing, I'd like to find my stepmother. I wonder how I could do it? The best thing I can do is to go to Ravelli and tell him all that happened to me. The good-hearted old fellow may be able to give me some advice worth following."

Musing in this strain, Roddy reached the Bowery.

Most of the business places were closed, only the lights in saloons and museums gleaming here and there through the whirling snowflakes.

The boy had on a well-worn coat, and a derby hat, covered with snow, and his shoes became soaking wet, but he did not notice it.

He paused at a concert saloon for a few minutes, and then went on across town. When he reached the corner of Canal street, he was about to turn down, when he saw a tall man in a tight black coat, the skirts sticking out around his thin legs, and an old stovepipe hat upon his head, who was hurrying on ahead of him.

It was Bradford Bull, and it made Roddy start to see him.

He held an old and faded umbrella, and his hands were incased in his dilapidated gloves, through the ends of which his fingers protruded.

Judging by the direction he was pursuing, the boy imagined that he was making his way toward Denny Fagin's place at the Five Points, and the boy softly laughed when he thought what a hard time the actor would have to find the pseudo undertaker there.

"I think I'd better get out of his observation as soon as possible," Roddy muttered. "Let him imagine that Fagin is there, if he likes—the longer the better, and by all means until the rascal is well away on his voyage to the South Seas, where the Random Lass is going for whales. He may recover his senses inside of the trunk, and yell to be released, but they may think it is Harcastle, and won't pay any attention to him until they are far away from land. Then, when they discover their mistake, there will be no means of sending him back, and he'll have to complete the voyage."

Roddy laughed softly to himself, and turned toward the east side again, leaving Mr. Bull to pursue his way, unaware that he had been pursued by the boy whom he imagined was safely secured in the forecastle of the bark, down at the river front.

Upon reaching Cherry street, Roddy made his way back to the tenement in which he had lived with Bradford Bull.

He did not forget Pippo Ravelli's habit of going out, not to return until ten o'clock every night, and as he passed near the Catholic church with the fiery cross on its steeple he glanced at the clock, and saw that it only lacked a few minutes of midnight.

He had no fear of being unable to get in the tenement house, for the street doors of such buildings are rarely ever locked at night.

Besides, Pippo never retired before twelve or one o'clock, as his evenings were devoted to consuming the contents of every play and opera upon which he could lay his hands.

When Roddy reached the house, he saw somebody just disappearing in the doorway, and paying no heed to the man whom he imagined to be one of the tenants, he followed him into the dark hall.

It was a double tenement—that is, there was a set of apartments on either side of the hall—and not a light broke the intense darkness that pervaded the foul-odored passages.

The boy heard the man going up the stairs ahead of him, and as he was ascending the stairs leading to the landing below the top floor, upon which the old Italian had his apartments, he heard a door open and shut, and the sounds of the man's footsteps ceased.

No light came out upon the hall, so Roddy judged that he must have been the tenant who occupied the other half of the floor.

Knocking at Pippo's door, it was opened, and the next moment the old teacher was heartily shaking the boy by the hand.

Then Roddy sat down beside Ravelli and told him all that had transpired since Bull had robbed Morris Harcastle upstairs.

The old man then said that Bradford had only returned to the apartments once, and that was to remove his wretched furniture; after telling which Pippo insisted that Roddy should take up his quarters there.

The boy was nothing loth to this arrangement, and as they had nothing else to do, Roddy took a lesson, as usual, from his old teacher.

Then he remembered the man who had come upstairs ahead of him, and when his lesson was finished, he said:

"I see that your neighbor still has his apartments next door, Pippo."

"De neighbor? Ah, carissima, no! He makit de fighta so much they putit him out."

"Oh, he's gone, eh? Then who was it that moved in?"

"No wong. De rooma is yet notit de occupy."

"But, Pippo, I heard some one go in as I came up the stairs."

"Musta be a mistaka. Prob'ly de mana dat takit your olda room upa de stair."

"Are our rooms taken? But no, I am sure I heard some one enter next door."

"Dat not couldit de bea," said Pippo, shaking his head.

Roddy looked mystified. He was sure that he heard some one enter the other apartments. Still, as the hall was so dark, he did not wish to insist upon it after what Pippo told him, as, after all, he might have been deceived. There was a possibility that the man had gone up the next flight of stairs and entered Bradford Bull's old apartments.

It preyed upon his mind strangely, but why he involuntarily attached so much importance to the event he had no idea.

He thought the matter over a few minutes, and then said, as he recollected his stepmother:

"How could I find out where Hardcastle lived, Pippo?"

"Perhaps de signor Bull he knowa de place."

"It's more than likely, but I would not dare to broach the subject to him. I want to keep out of his way, in fact."

"Maybe I finda dat out fora you."

"If you can, Pippo, I might be able to discover my stepmother."

"Den youa notit de trouble; I see Bradford some time."

"Do not let him know that I want the information, or he will suspect."

"No, no, no," interrupted the little old Italian, with a cunning look. "I notit one fool, Roddy. Youa fine de woman, den you getit de money when youa havit de twenty-one year. Trusta old Pippo for dat."

"Then I shall rely upon you, my old friend. And now, don't you think it will be an imposition for me to stay here with you—"

"No, no, no, Roddy. Disa house isa you home."

"But, Pippo, you have no room for me here."

"Bah! Dat not isa de matter. I hava not more dan one fire. De odder rooma too cold. Ifa you notit de care to sleepa here in dis room on de lounge—one folding bed, youa be warm an' comfortable in here."

Roddy would have demurred further only that Ravelli would not have it, so the boy was forced to keep quiet, and a short time afterward the old Italian got up and, bidding Roddy to help him make up the bed, the folding lounge was opened out, a mattress placed on it, over which sheets and blankets were laid, one of Pippo's pillows brought in, and then the old Italian locked the hall door and bade Roddy good-night.

Pippo went into the next room, leaving Roddy alone.

The boy glanced around his cozy quarters in huge contentment.

The room served as both kitchen and dining-room, and was quite comfortably furnished. There was a carpet on the floor, pictures on the walls, and a stove upon which a kettle was singing.

The furniture was in good condition, and everything scrupulously clean. A clock was ticking on the mantelpiece, and between the two windows, at which hung a pair of shades rolled half-way up, was a wooden table, upon which stood a lamp that flooded the room with light. The folding bed-lounge, upon which Roddy was to pass the night, stood against the wall on the left-hand side on entering, and at the foot of the lounge was a chair, upon which the boy began to lay his clothing. Below the chair was the door which opened on the hall, and beside it the door leading into Pippo's bedroom. The old Italian had closed the door, and Roddy could hear him disrobing. The boy sat down on the edge of his bed and pulled off his shoes. He gazed around the room with supreme content, for he could not remember having ever slept in such cozy quarters before.

The darkness of the night outside made the windows look black as ink, but he could see the silent snowflakes playing down past the window, and piling up a soft, white carpet on the iron-railed fire-escape balcony that crossed the back of the house.

A melancholy look crept across Roddy's face as he continued undressing.

"Born to be an actor," he mused. "That is what Pippo said of me, and even old Wildrake intimated as much. But such a poor, miserable homeless wretch as I am has no show. Others who have the advantage of money and influence are the ones who get ahead and tread such as I am down. I owe everything I know to Pippo. He has been very good to me."

The wind was beginning to rise out of doors, and it hurled

the pure flakes against the windows and sighed over the house-tops mournfully.

Roddy knelt down and said his prayers.

It was a habit he was accustomed to, which Bradford Bull had taught him twelve years before, when the man was much better morally than he was now, and Roddy never neglected it.

Then he crept into his comfortable bed, after turning the light of the lamp a little lower, and within a few minutes he fell sound asleep.

Unburdened then of all the cares and strife of his unhappy young life, the boy slumbered on, the only sounds mingling with his soft breathing being the ticking of the busy clock and the singing of the kettle.

The hands of the time-piece edged around to the figure one.

Then a single silvery chime rang through the room.

The sound was soft and sweet, but it seared Roddy's brain like a knife of fire. Uttering a deep sigh, he suddenly awoke and sat bolt upright.

Then he swept a quick glance around the room.

The wind rattled the window-panes, and he glanced at the dark night scene.

A most startling sight suddenly met his view.

Outside of the dark window further from the bed, he saw the outlines of a man, who was staring in at him with lurid eyes and a malignant expression.

Instantly the boy recognized him as Bradford Bull; and he was just about to spring from the bed, when a flitting shadow outside of the other window caught his view. The figure was further away from that window than Bull from the other, and looked dim and shadowy.

It was the bent form of an old man with long hair, and in his hand he clutched a pistol, which he was aiming at the actor at the other window.

Although the snowflakes were falling thick and fast upon the two men standing out on the fire-escape balcony, Roddy recognized the other.

He was Pippo Ravelli.

CHAPTER IV.

A PRISONER.

The tableau presented to Roddy's view was most startling as his glance fell upon the two windows in Pippo's kitchen.

Startled from a profound slumber by the striking of the clock, he was half awake when he saw Bradford Bull glaring in through the window at him and saw Ravelli through the other window standing out on the fire-escape balcony aiming a revolver at Bull.

The falling snow lent the picture a weird aspect, for the interior of the room in which Roddy sat up in his bed was dimly glowing with the light of the lamp on the table, and the half-shaded windows were as black as ink. The figures of the two men outside were startlingly outlined against the dark background. Bull was close to the window, and was more plainly revealed than Pippo, whose figure had a shadowy appearance, framed by the other window.

Then it flashed across Roddy's mind that he had not been deceived by hearing the footfalls of the man going into the vacant apartments next door to Ravelli's rooms, when he had first entered the tenement that night.

Evidently Bull had not gone to Denny Fagin's undertaking establishment at the Five Points, as Roddy imagined when he escaped from the Random Lass, after he fixed Denny and Hardcastle to sail away to the South Seas on the whaling voyage in his stead by locking them up in the fore-castle on the bark.

The actor must have changed his mind, and come to see Ravelli for some purpose, and hearing Roddy coming upstairs and not knowing who he was, he had probably slipped into the vacant rooms to listen and discover.

He now knew that the boy had escaped his clutches, but to assure himself he had climbed out the window on the fire-escape balcony, and walking over to Ravelli's windows, he peered in and saw the boy sleeping inside.

The actor was startled and puzzled, as he could not imagine how the boy managed to escape from the ship after being locked down in the fore-castle in an apparently senseless condition from the effect of the chloroform with which Captain Hanks and Denny Fagin had stupefied him when they had taken him aboard the bark.

Still there was the boy before his eyes, and as he glared in through the window, devising some means of getting Roddy back on the ship, he did not see the old Italian come through the window of the vacant rooms out on to the balcony with a revolver in his hand.

Pippo had arisen to get a drink of water at the sink in the kitchen when he caught sight of Bradford's form outside of the window.

Hastily dressing himself, and securing his revolver, he passed out into the hall, through the front room door, crept into the vacant rooms, and went out after Bull, as he feared that the man had come to injure Roddy.

The old Italian had engendered a deep-rooted affection for the boy, and would permit no harm to befall him if he could help it.

Besides, he knew very well that as long as Bull knew Roddy had escaped from the ship, he would go back to the Random Lass, and perhaps discover Danny Fagin's plight. The keeper of the undertaking shop would be released, and Roddy would have another enemy to fight against.

But Pippo had no intention of permitting anything of the kind.

He made up his mind to make a prisoner of Bull, and keep him locked up until the following night, in order to give the ship ample time to put to sea, and carry away Fagin and Harcastle with it.

Roddy would then have two enemies less to deal with.

Fearful lest Bull might shoot at the boy, Pippo had drawn a bead on him, so that if the actor produced a weapon, he could force him to pocket it with the utmost promptitude before he could use it.

Several moments passed, and Bull was just about to open the window to enter the room when he heard the clock strike one, and before he could conceal himself he saw Roddy sit up and glance at him.

The actor was always quick to act, so he threw up the window and sprang into the room just as Pippo darted after him.

He did not see the old teacher of elocution, and was just about to thrust his hand into his hip-pocket, to draw a weapon with which to frighten Roddy into compliance with his orders, when he was suddenly made to jump, and glance nervously over his shoulder, by seeing Pippo sitting in the window cocking his revolver.

"By the living jingo!" exclaimed Bull, in dismay. "I am collared!"

"Si! Per Pazzo, an' youa mova de han' an' I blow de brain!" calmly replied Pippo, as he leveled his weapon at the actor's head.

Bull held up his hands in the wildest alarm.

"Drop it!" he exclaimed, dodging from one side to the other. "Don't shoot!"

"Dena youa doit whata I tellit you!" exclaimed Pippo.

"Yes, yes! Anything. Roddy—help me!" panted Bradford, with increasing alarm.

His teeth began to chatter, and his hair to rise on end.

Pippo stepped into the room and closed the window, while Roddy sprang from the bed, took his pants from a chair and hastily put them on.

When Bull appealed to him for assistance the boy burst out laughing.

"What!" he exclaimed. "Help you? I guess not, Bull."

"Oh, Roddy, is this the way you treat the man who brought you up?"

"Bah! Stop your whining, you miserable hound. I've a great mind to tell Pippo to put a bullet in your carcass for all the misery you have caused me. But it isn't likely he will shoot you, if you do as we want."

"And what is that, may I be so bold as to ask?" tremulously queried Bull.

"We a makit him de lockit de odder room," said Pippo. "Hea go backit de ship, an' finda de plan. Ah, no, signor mio! Wea playit de game better dan you. First, we hava de soldier!"

"Eh?" demanded Bull, with a frightened glance around.

The old Italian had lowered his weapon, but still kept it in readiness for use.

"Which room, Pippo?" queried Roddy, with a sly wink at his old teacher.

"Next door," replied the old fellow, returning the wink. "Youa takit de lamp."

The boy seized the lamp from the table, and opened the door.

Mr. Bull gazed on with a look of trepidation upon his long, thin face, and ruefully rubbed his long, thin nose, as he was not quite certain of his fate.

The hall was as dark as Erebus, and as he glanced out an idea suddenly occurred to him. He distrusted the appearance of things, and meant to make an effort to escape from his captors the first chance he got.

"Now, signor!" exclaimed Pippo, interrupting his plotting, "right abouta de face."

"What! Do you want me to follow the boy?" queried the actor.

"H'm, h'm," said Pippo, nodding. "Forwarda marchit."

Roddy went ahead, the actor made a military salute in a grim fashion, and proceeding after the boy, had stuffed some matches in his pocket, and Pippo brought up the rear, with the revolver in his hand.

The door of the rooms next door stood wide open, as Pippo had left it, and Roddy went in, turned to the right, passed through a door into a small bedroom, and Mr. Bull edged up a little closer to him.

Roddy was just about to open the door communicating with the next room, when Mr. Bull suddenly gave the lamp a kick, and sent it flying out of Roddy's hand. It arose in the air, was extinguished, and struck the floor with a crash that smashed it to fragments the next moment.

Instantly the room became wrapped in profound darkness, and Roddy gave utterance to an involuntary shout of dismay.

"Pippo!" he cried. "Guard the door. Don't let him escape."

"Altro!" growled the Italian; then there sounded the click of the trigger of his weapon, and the patter of his feet, as he glided to the doorway.

Mr. Bull dashed open the door ahead of him, flung Roddy aside, and ran through the next bedroom, with the intention of passing to the front of the house, and making his escape through the front hall door.

Roddy divined his intention at once, and ran after him.

"Come, Pippo!" he cried. "Come on, or he will escape us after all."

"No, no!" came the voice of the old man, in gleeful accents, from somewhere in the darkness. "I notit de fraid. De doora she lockit, an' can'ta get away."

At this moment Mr. Bull seized the knob in the front room door, rattled it furiously a moment, and then they heard a terrific bang as he hurled his body against it, in the hope of forcing it open.

Roddy drew the matches from his pocket and ignited one.

As he held it up, he could not refrain from laughing at the comical figure cut by Mr. Bull in his frantic endeavor to force open the door.

The fringe of hair around his ears stood on end, his home-made paper collar had become torn, and now stuck out around his long, skinny neck; he stood on the tips of his toes, with his left shoulder drawn up, and pressed with his bulging forehead against the panels with all his might.

At this juncture Pippo came in, and letting go the door, Mr. Bull made a mad rush across the room. He tripped, fell with a bang that blackened one of his watery eyes, picked himself up, and then dove head first into a closet, in the darkness.

"Hurrah!" exclaimed Roddy, as he slammed the door shut after the frightened actor, and shoved a bolt into its socket. "We've got him just where we want him, Pippo! Come in here, old fellow. He's cooped up in this closet!"

"Let me out!" roared the smothered tones of the enraged Bull. "I'll have the law on you."

He banged on the door with feet and hands, just as Pippo came in.

"Nowa, Bull, youa keepit de still," advised Pippo, "or I hava de law myself!"

Visions of spending the night in jail were very unpleasant to Mr. Bull.

He had been there before, and had no desire to try it again. Consequently he remained as still as a mouse for a moment.

"What shall we do, Pippo?" asked Roddy. "Leave him in here?"

"Why certain. Dat isa de bes' place. Wea lockit alla de odder doors, an' to-morrow letta him go after de shipit she leava de dock."

"Blame you!" growled Mr. Bull, in rather savage tones, inside of the closet. "I'll get even with you for this, see if I don't."

"I advise you to leave me alone," said Roddy. "If you don't, you'll get the worst of this tussle in the end. I'll send you to prison, you old villain!"

"Well—I—swear!" groaned the actor, "and after all I have done for him! I—oh!"

He ended his remarks in a singular gurgle, then there sounded a squeaking sound, much as if a cork had been slipped into a bottle, a smacking of lips and an intense sigh.

of relief. It was evident that the actor had a pocket flask with him, and had been regaling himself for solace.

As it was useless to waste any more words with him, Roddy and Pippo went out, locking the doors after them, and, returning to their beds, they retired to slumber until the break of day.

The snowstorm had ceased, and the sun shone out cheerfully upon the brightest and frostiest weather they had had in several weeks.

After breakfasting, some food was prepared for Bull, and they both started into the other apartments with it. Unlocking the bedroom doors, they reached the front apartment, and then a sight met their gaze that filled them with dismay. The closet door stood wide open; the bolt-socket had been bursted away from the woodwork and Mr. Bull was gone!

The lock and screws of the front door lay on the floor, showing how he managed to get out.

Roddy looked glum and dispirited, and Pippo pulled a long face.

"He's gone, sure enough!" said the boy as last.

"An' maybe he goa to de ship!" groaned the old Italian.

"There is only one way to find out, Pippo; I'll run down to the dock and see. In an hour I'll be back, and let you know the news."

"Yes," assented Pippo, nodding his gray head. "Dat's de bes'."

They returned to the old Italian's apartments. Roddy put on his hat and coat, and hurrying downstairs, he made his way toward the river.

As he was hurrying into Grand street, he saw a figure ahead of him that almost caused his heart to stop palpitating.

"There he is, now!" he muttered. "And he's going to the dock, too! It must be that he did not get out of the closet until a short while ago, else he would have been down here long ago. I suppose, though, he stopped into a saloon and had his usual 'eye-opener,' as he calls it, and got his flask filled up again. Gee! That fellow is a terror!"

The boy crossed over to the other side of the street, and kept his eyes upon his long-legged enemy.

If Roddy could have devised any possible means to stop Bull from going any further, he would have done so. But there was no way in which he could accomplish it, so he was forced to trudge along and wonder what the actor was going to do.

When within a block of the river, Roddy caught sight of the Random Lass.

She was yet at the dock, but he saw that the sailors were unmooring her, and a tugboat was taking a line to pull her out in the stream.

The actor might get on board after all.

In his desperation to thwart the rascal, Roddy ran up to Bull.

The moment the actor's glance fell upon him, he rushed at the boy, his fist doubled up, with the intention of thrashing him.

That was just what Roddy designed, and as the irascible Bull gave him chase, he darted down a side street, with the actor in pursuit.

Roddy did not run far. He let the actor get close to him. Then he threw himself flat on the sidewalk. Bull stumbled over him and went sprawling into the gutter.

When he got on his feet, Roddy was gone. Bull then made his way down to the boat. But the Random Lass by that time was being towed down the river.

CHAPTER V.

THE CALLBOYS' CHANCE.

The scene opens nearly two weeks later, on a freezing cold morning.

The Olympic stage was in a state of sublime confusion after the variety company took it, and all the regular employees, from the fifty-cents-a-night super up to the stock-holding manager, were inclined to sulphurize the sacred scenic air. Roddy had gone up in the flies to look for some of the border men, who were wanted down in the scene dock, and a newspaper reporter came in to talk about the drama which Mr. Jerry Wildrake was going to put on the following week, at his own risk, for the first time in America. The Olympic's was no mean stage to make such a great effort on, for Laura Keane, Mrs. John Wood, Owney Burke, John Gilbert, Charles Parsloe, and a host of our most popular actors and actresses had made it the scene of some of their best work.

Wildrake had chosen his cast from the books of a Union Square theatrical company agency a week before, when the variety show succeeded the Shakespearian drama of Julius

Cæsar, and as those he had picked out had played in the drama in London the season previous, he had no fear of the play proving anything but a success. There was, however, one role to be filled for which it seemed impossible to secure just the proper person.

The character was juvenile, very important to the play, and it fretted the nervous and blustery manager a good deal.

What to do about it, he had no idea, until Roddy came down from the flies, and his glance rested on the energetic young callboy.

"Blame it!" he exclaimed, his face brightening up. "He's just the one I want! Oh, what a lunkhead I am! Just like me, though. Some one ought to kick the suspenders off my pants. I say! Roddy, you infernal scamp—come here."

"Yes, sir. I just sent the bordermen down," said the boy, running up to the manager.

"To the deuce with them. I want to talk business to you, my lad."

"Well, sir? Business? What can I do for you, Mr. Wildrake?"

"My boy, you've taken part in some of the variety farces that come here, haven't you?"

"Yes, sir. I just sent the bordermen down," said the boy.

"How would you like to take a very decent role in the new drama?"

Wildrake keenly watched the boy as he asked this, and saw him start, turn red in the face, and a latent fire of enthusiasm spring into his eyes at the prospect.

"What!" he cried, scarcely able to realize the truth of what was said to him, "me take part in a drama? Oh, Mr. Wildrake, it is my only ambition!"

"Could you learn a part between to-day and Monday night?"

"This is Friday morning. Yes, I could, if there is not too much of it."

"The play is blamed simple and the part is easy—just suited to you. Of course, if you make a success of it, I'll pay you the regular salary. But don't you dare to take it if you don't think yourself fully competent to do so."

"What is the name of the play and the part I am to assume, sir?"

"It is called 'The Boy King.' It's an ancient English piece. The plot is worked out in three acts and six scenes. Act first shows some conspirators stealing the infant son of the regent queen, and tells how the Earl, her enemy, raised the child to boyhood in ignorance of his rank. You do not appear until the second act. Then you go on as a harlequin, having been roving about the fairs with a band of strolling players, with whom the Earl fostered you. The queen has heard of your Punchinello fame and sent for you. In the palace you discover a plot on the part of the Earl to have the queen assassinated, so he can succeed her, and warn her of it. The second scene of this act shows the royal bed-chamber. You are concealed behind a curtain, after placing a dummy figure in the queen's bed, to give the alarm to the guards concealed outside to rush in upon the conspirators when they come to commit the crime. They discover the trick you played, fire their pistols at you, and fly just as the household guards run in upon the scene. Then you fall—shot."

"The third act reveals your identity to the queen and you regain your kingdom. You'll have the leading character, but there is not much to it."

"I'll look over the play, and let you know to-night if I can take it."

"Oh, you can do it, if you try, Roddy. You're a born actor anyway. I've kept my eye on you all along, and if you come up to my expectations in this thing, I'll do all I can to bring you out, for I know you'd like to be a full-fledged actor."

The boy was wild with delight, for the nearest and dearest wish in his heart was about to be fulfilled. He had hoped, longed and prayed for some such a chance as this, and at last the much coveted opportunity had arrived.

Since the day the Random Lass sailed away, he had been boarding with old Ravelli, and his lessons had gone on without either of them seeing or hearing anything of Bradford Bull; and the boy studied and worked hard to attain the nearness to perfection in the profession, studied by all those ambitious for Thespian fame.

The boy then thanked the fat manager, and turned away. Near by him stood one of the new supers intently watching him.

He had been listening to all that passed between the boy and the manager, and as Roddy turned around and caught his curious glance, he started, turned hastily away, and glided through one of the wings over by the left third en-

trance, where he mingled with some of the men, among whom he vanished.

There had been an extraordinary stare in the man's eyes that struck Roddy as being very peculiar, and made him feel decidedly uncomfortable.

He was a stoutly built fellow, attired in tight pants, a red shirt and a greasy jacket, the whole combination of which gave him a particularly tough look.

His face was coarse and red, his eyes small and his hair all cropped off, much as if he had not long been in the city from Blackwell's Island.

The man paid no more attention to the boy than any of the others, which set the boy's suspicions at rest finally, and after the work was over for that morning, Roddy secured a copy of the play and started for his new home as fast as he could go to impart to his old friend the news which had so delighted him.

The super who had been so intently watching Roddy soon after left the theater.

When the boy reached the house he was disappointed at not finding Pippo in.

Not to waste any time, however, he set to work with a will upon the play he had, and began to learn the words and actions of the character he was to assume.

About three o'clock Ravelli entered, and Roddy told him the news.

The old man seemed to be as much delighted over it as Roddy himself.

The boy showed him the play, and Pippo told him how to proceed with it.

Roddy had a wonderfully retentive memory—one of the first perquisites of a good actor—and his elocution was remarkably fine.

The part he was to assume was the most prominent, yet he had really less work to do than any of the other actors, for the simple reason that what he was set for was to the point—no superfluities making up his role in order to lengthen it out. Of course he could add all the stage business of an original kind he was capable of, to make the part more prominent. But he realized the greatest salient point about it to be like a good joke—the less words employed the more pith to the issue.

He remained up till twelve o'clock working like a beaver, and when Ravelli finished some work he had to do, Roddy told him that he had entirely mastered the lines of the character.

To exemplify, he went through the role.

This proved exceedingly satisfactory to Pippo, who was a very critical man.

Then the stage business was taken up.

It really required more work and care than the lines.

The little kitchen was extemporized into a miniature stage, and the relative positions were exercised and rehearsed over and over.

The clock had struck three before they stopped, tired and sleepy.

The result, though, showed Pippo that the boy was a born genius in the acting line, and that he had a very correct conception of the character.

The next morning the tireless boy attacked his task again with renewed vigor, for he was fired with ambition, and eager to improve his chance to gain a foothold upon the stage. This opportunity was therefore to be nursed with all the care of which he was capable.

In the afternoon he was obliged to desist, and go down to the theater for a matinee performance of the variety show.

Roddy practised with Pippo that night, all day Sunday, and again on Monday up to noon, for he was determined to get the role down fine.

He was nervous when the momentous day arrived at last, but did not show it when he went to the rehearsal in the afternoon.

The play was advertised heavily, and Roddy retained his own name on the show bills, programmes and newspaper announcements.

When the rehearsal was over and he left the theater, the tough-looking super, whom he observed on several occasions since the last Friday eyeing him in a suspicious manner, followed him out. He kept some distance behind the boy until several blocks were passed over, and then he went into a liquor saloon, and going through he entered a small room in the back, filled with tables and chairs. In a corner by the stove sat Bradford Bull, reading a newspaper and sipping a steaming hot punch that stood upon a table beside him.

He arose and beckoned to the supe when he came in, and after the tough individual had ordered a drink, they became engaged in earnest conversation.

"The plan cannot help succeeding," said the actor in earnest tones, after a while. "I stole this key from the man. Take it and you can open the door with it."

"Yes," replied the other, "I'll do it er git killed meself. An' now, give us the scads."

He took the key which Bull handed to him and put it in his pocket.

"Should your first plan fail," said Bull, drawing a bill from his pocket and placing it in the man's hand, "the second can't. You are to take the part of the conspirators who fire at the boy king. Be sure you have a bullet in your weapon and hit him."

The man nodded, and a sardonic grin overspread his ugly, red face.

A few minutes later he arose and took leave of the actor.

"And now," muttered Bill, with a dark frown, when he was alone again, "we'll see who will win. Roderick Random, you have done wrong to arouse my enmity! Once you are dead my fortune is made on your father's money, and I will have revenge for the injuries you did me."

CHAPTER VI.

A TERRIBLE ENCOUNTER.

By half-past six Roddy was back to the Olympic, accompanied by Pippo, who was anxious to see his pupil make his debut in the new play.

Had the boy been less excited, he might have noticed the manner in which the tough super followed him with his glance wherever he went.

As he was not to go on until the second act, he had plenty of time to dress and have his face made up; so, after giving Pippo a seat on the left wing, he went to the dressing-room and got on his harlequin suit. It fit his whole body like a glove, and showed off a well-developed young form from his neck to his heels. Around his waist was a girdle, from which hung a sheath containing a dagger.

Putting on a pair of low slippers, and drawing a white skull-cap over his hair, and fastening it on at his ears, he coated his face with white powder and then surveyed himself in the glass while he penciled his eyebrows.

It was a pretty suit, of small diamonds, each one being a different color.

Roddy's dressing-room was close to the door that led into the cellar, and when he went in he noticed a brazier standing near the sink, in which a hot charcoal fire was burning, into which an iron rod was thrust, with a handle of wood. A boy sat on a stool beside it, dozing, and the actors who had finished dressing were assembling in the green-room, waiting for the call-boy, who was hired to act as Roddy's substitute, to summon them.

Having finished his dressing, Roddy was just preparing to leave his dressing-room, when there came the hurried patter of footsteps outside of his door.

It was drowned an instant later by the prompt-bell that sent up the curtain on the first act after the music stopped; then there came a loud thump on his door.

Wondering what was the matter, Roddy opened the door.

"Oh!" exclaimed a voice outside, "be's you Roddy de call-boy?"

"Yes!" he replied, eyeing the other. "What do you want?"

The person who stood before him was a sinister-looking individual.

He wore black tights and shoes with long, pointed toes; his body was enveloped in a long, black cloak, under which gleamed a pair of pistols in his belt; upon his hands were dark gauntlets, a black mask covered his face, and upon his wig of long hair was a slouched hat with a long, somber plume in it.

The man evinced the utmost excitement, as he replied hastily:

"Den folly me—folly me! Dere ain't no time ter lose!"

"I don't understand what you mean," exclaimed Roddy in surprise.

"Didn't you bring an ole duffer wid yer, wid long, gray hair?"

"Ah, you mean Pippo, the man I left sitting in the left wing?"

"Well, he got up ter cross der stage jist now, and fell troo a trap-door."

The boy hurried from his dressing-room after the man, who ran to the cellar door.

They were on the right-hand side of the stage, and the scene for the first act being set, and the doors closed, of course Roddy could not see across the stage.

Not a soul was in sight, except the boy who was dozing near the brazier.

The conspirator unbolted the cellar door, and Roddy grasped a handful of matches and a candle from the shelf inside on the wall.

The cellar was shrouded in the densest gloom.

Roddy was guided wholly by the footsteps of the man in the darkness.

The super had hurried ahead of the boy, and presently his footfalls ceased to sound on the cement pavement. But an odd noise suddenly broke the stillness.

It was much like the turning of a key in a padlock.

The next moment the boy was astonished to hear the sound of flying footsteps passing him, and he heard his companion reach the cellar stairs and run up as if his life depended upon it. Wondering what this meant, the boy lit a match and ignited the candle. As the dull glow flared up, he saw dozens of posts all around him, supporting the cross-beams under the stage.

But not a sign of Pippo was to be seen anywhere.

Puzzled to comprehend why he saw nothing of Pippo, he took a step nearer to the hatchway, holding the candle aloft so he could see better.

The next instant he was half paralyzed with consternation to hear a thunderous roar, and one swift glance showed him that the box under the hatchway was a large cage, in which stood an enormous male lion!

The door was wide open, and the beast was half way out of the cage, glaring at Roddy with eyes that glowed like balls of fire in the darkness!

It was the beast that the tamer had been exhibiting in the variety show the week before, which the man had stored in the cellar until he could remove it.

When the conspirator reached the head of the stairs he bolted the door and glanced around.

Seeing nobody looking, he hastily glided away through the scene dock across to the stage door, beside which was a little room, lit up by a netted single gas jet. In this room sat Bradford Bull.

"Well," he asked, arising, with an evil look upon his face, "what success?"

"Hush! Not so loud!" gasped the super, holding up his finger warningly.

He was the same man whom Bull had met in the saloon that afternoon.

"Did you fix him?" whispered Bull, eagerly.

"Yes; I lured him down wid a lie, an' opened der cage door wid der key yer gave me. I jes' lef' him this minute. An' oh, Lor'! I'm terrible excited!"

He was shaking like a leaf, and Bull patted him on the back.

"Don't give away like this," exclaimed the actor in alarm, "or you'll get collared. I must go now."

They shook hands and separated, just as the smothered tones of that distant roar faintly reached their ears, from almost directly beneath their feet.

It made them both involuntarily shudder and look guilty.

Mr. Bull's pace past the old doorkeeper was accelerated a good deal, and the super hurried away to make his entrance upon the stage in anything but a happy frame of mind over the rascality he had perpetrated.

The roar uttered by the lion did not have half the dreadful import to the two rascals it did to Roddy, though.

He stood there like a statue, holding the candle over his head, too startled and overwhelmed with horror to utter a word.

The beast had not been fed since that morning, and consequently was in a most savage mood. Uttering a series of deep, guttural roars, it sprang from the cage and, with one leap, landed in front of the boy.

Knowing very well that if he turned and ran away, the beast would not hesitate an instant to spring upon him, Roddy kept his glance riveted upon the fiery orbs of the savage monster, and then shouted for help.

No sooner had his voice pealed out, though, when the crouching beast sprang at him. He saw it coming, but before he could avoid the huge body it struck him like a thunderbolt, and he was knocked over on his back, with the ponderous beast on top of him, roaring and snarling in a deafening manner.

Roddy raised his dagger and plunged it into the lion's neck through the thick, tawny mane, and rolled over.

The beast uttered a frightful cry of pain, and bounded back, bleeding at the wound the boy had dealt it.

"Now is my chance!" thought Roddy. "I can get up, and—"

But before he could move an inch, the beast sprang toward him again. It was maddened at the stab the boy had given it, and ferocious with hunger.

CHAPTER VII.

BEFORE THE FOOTLIGHTS AT LAST.

As the lion sprang at Roddy the second time he gave himself up for lost, for he knew very well he could hardly defend himself with only a dagger.

Down closer to the ground crouched the lion ready to spring upon him, and an instant later he saw its massive body cleave the air.

Roddy's quick, keen eyes were fixed upon the brute, and as it came he lurched himself over on one side. And not an instant too soon, for, ere he was well out of harm's way, there came a thud as the beast alighted upon the spot he had just evacuated. The boy breathed a sigh of relief.

The next moment there sounded a shout, and bounding to his feet he saw the lion dart back whining and crying, with the boy in front of it whom Roddy had seen sleeping beside the brazier upon the stage.

The youth held the red-hot iron bar in his hand, which he was thrusting in the lion's face, causing it to retreat in abject fear.

Behind the boy stood Pippo and Wildrake, gazing on in horror.

Cringing to the floor, moving its head from side to side, and utterly cowed at the sight of the fiery iron bar, the beast went back step by step, growling, snarling and whining. It held the fire in deathless dread, and the object of the lion-tamer's assistant was evidently fixed upon driving the beast back into the cage.

It swerved from side to side, crossing and moving in an irregular line, but finally the youth with the iron bar backed it up to the open door of the cage.

All this time he had not uttered a word, but kept his eyes fixed determinedly upon those of the lion, and as soon as he had the ravenous beast on a line with the door he made a lunge toward it with the hot iron that elicited a frightened growl from the king of the jungle, it made a bound backward that landed it within the cage, and the next moment the door slammed shut and it was made a captive.

Then Roddy uttered a heartfelt sigh of relief.

"By jingo!" he exclaimed, hurrying to the boy's side, "you just arrived in time."

"How did this happen?" queried the plucky boy, as he re-locked the door.

"I was lured down here by the person who liberated the beast to get killed."

"Jerusalem! I see that the cage has been opened by somebody, for there is a key in the lock which I recently imagined I lost while in a barroom with an actor."

"What actor was that?" eagerly asked Roddy, as Wildrake and Pippo drew near.

"His name is Bull—Bradford Bull," replied the youth.

"Then you can depend that he stole the key from you," said Roddy earnestly.

"Stole it from me! Why should he do so, I'd like to know?"

"In order to put up this job on me, for he is my enemy."

"Thunder and lightning!" exclaimed Wildrake, wrathfully, "this was a put-up job, did you say? Then where in thunder is that scoundrel Bull?"

"He didn't get me down here," replied Roddy. "The rascal is too cunning to expose himself. He hired one of the supes to do his dirty work."

The four then went upon the stage, just as the callboy went by, crying: "All ready for the second act."

The scene was set, and a moment after the bell rang for the orchestra, accompanied by a sudden lowering and raising of the footlights.

Roddy drank a glass of water, brushed the dirt off of his tights, glanced over the lines of his part, and hurried to the third right entrance, where he joined a queer-looking group of players.

"I must contain myself," he muttered, desperately. "Let me gain control of my faculties. If I play it badly they will sneer at me; if I play the part good they will applaud me. It is just as easy to do the work well as it is to execute it badly. Therefore, I must do it as good as I am able."

Yet in spite of this fortifying resolution he began to tremble, and his face grew very pale under the powder upon his face, as he got his cue to go on with the others to carry out his part.

The moment he got on the stage, everything for an instant

began to swim before his gaze. He felt as if it would be a happy relief if the floor would open at his feet and swallow him.

He gasped for breath a moment like a drowning person; then like a flash his sudden stage fright was gone, a firm resolution came to his aid, he felt careless and indifferent to the hundreds of faces before him and more perfectly at ease than if he was only before an audience of children.

His keen glance swept around at the sea of faces.

Roddy then got his cue, and began his act.

The music began after that, and the strolling players gave an entertainment for the queen's amusement, after which the rest dispersed, and the boy had the stage alone for a few minutes.

Warming up to his work, he threw his whole soul into the words and action, and as the manager glanced through a "peep-hole" at the audience, he saw their interest in the boy gradually deepening until when Roddy reached the climax, there came a ripple of applause from every part of the house. The first scene of the second act ended, a perfect thunder of applause followed.

"Roderick Random! Roderick Random!" came the cry from the audience. It was taken up by everybody, and a perfect furor ensued with a clapping of hands, stamping of feet, and the usual pandemonium of thumps, howls, whistles, and banging of the "bouncers' " rattans up in the gallery.

Roddy was behind the scenes, his heart swelling and palpitating fast. His eyes snapped and sparkled, and his soul was enthused with the wild fire of delighted emotion, as these sounds reached his ears.

It was a most unprecedented ovation, and the proudest moment of Roddy's life.

"I must have been born to be an actor!" he mused, as he retired amid a renewed round of applause. "Anyhow, I've caught the house, and a most surprising amount of appreciation. I'll never forget this night as long as I live—never!"

The next scene was being set as a bedroom of the palace, and Roddy changed his harlequin costume for a courtier suit of faint lilac color.

Tights and trunks, doublet and cape lined with bright crimson, a small rapier at his side, and a white plumed cap on his blond wig, made him look magnificent.

The queen of the play was to be assassinated at the duke's order by the dark-masked conspirators, and as Roddy arrived at that part of his act where he watches them come in to murder the queen, he wondered which was the man who lured him down into the cellar to encounter the ferocious lion.

The boy's acting in the second scene surpassed that of the first, as he now had redoubled confidence in himself.

At the end of the scene he was discovered by the conspirators, and he saw them draw their weapons to fire at him.

Little did that vast audience, any one on the stage, or Roddy himself imagine that Bradford Bull's emissary had a bullet in one of the pistols then leveled at him. The man had succeeded in his design upon finding that Roddy escaped the jaws of the lion by surreptitiously putting a bullet in the pistol of one of the other supers, and that revolver was now aimed at the boy.

The scene thrilled the audience to a high pitch of suppressed excitement.

There came a series of reports from the weapons.

"Oh, I am shot!" screamed Roddy the next instant.

He reeled back and pitched over on the stage with his hand clasped to his bosom.

The curtain went down amid a thunder of applause from the audience, who voted that the boy's acting in that scene was wonderfully realistic. But none of them knew that an assassin's shot had been fired at the boy.

CHAPTER VIII.

BRADFORD BULL'S PLOT.

When the curtain fell the supers hurried off the stage to the dressing-room to prepare for the third act, in which the identity of the Boy King was to be disclosed. Roddy lay upon the stage unnoticed for a few moments, in the bustle and confusion that ensued the dropping of the curtain.

Outside, the band began to play an interlude and numbers of men got up to go out during the intermissions, as the air in the theater seemed to be very sultry.

The scene-shifters heard their "boss" call "Strike!" and rushed on the stage.

One of them nearly fell over the form of Roddy, and uttered a cry.

Wildrake and Pippo ran up to him in wondering surprise.

"By the everlasting snakes!" exclaimed the stage manager, "what's the matter?"

"Aye Maria!" cried Pippo, in alarm. "De boya be killa!"

It made Wildrake fairly jump, and Pippo knelt down beside him and peered into Roddy's face very earnestly for a moment.

"He isn't dead, blame you!" cried the manager. "He's fainted. The excitement has overcome the dear little rogue. Get some water, old duff."

Pippo shook his long gray hair, bounded to his feet and hurried away with a look of suspicion and fear upon his smooth old face.

He returned a moment later with a tin cup filled with water, and as Wildrake had lifted Roddy up in his arms, Pippo laved the boy's temples.

In a few minutes he recovered his senses and sat up.

"Oh!" he groaned, placing his hand to his head. "Who shot me?"

"Who shot you—why, blame your bones, Roddy, you've only fainted!" said the puffing and panting stage manager.

"It must have been the same supe who came to my dressing-room and told me to follow him down into the cellar," said Roddy. "His first design was to have the lion kill me; failing in that he must have resolved to accomplish his villainous purpose by shooting me."

"By Hamlet's ghost, I'll flay the villain if you will only point him out to me, Roddy!" exclaimed Wildrake, dancing up and down excitedly.

There was no time to lose just then, as Roddy had to change his costume, so he hurried away to his dressing-room, accompanied by Pippo, who swore he would shoot anybody who dared to molest the boy in future.

Having finished dressing, Roddy came out on the wings again, and while passing the supers' dressing-room door with Ravelli he overheard the stage-manager's voice inside addressing the men in an angry tirade.

A few minutes later the orchestra stopped playing, and the curtain went up on the last act. Roddy did not make his appearance upon the stage until the commencement of the second scene.

His acting and elocution were extraordinary, and his interpretation of the character was simply marvelous in its utter perfection of detail.

He was molested no further, and when the final curtain descended, and the thunders of applause had ceased, everybody in the audience conceded that the boy was a born actor, a bright rising star in the Thespian firmament, and a most enviable honor to the profession.

Roddy hastily got off his costume, every article of which Pippo carefully and tenderly hung upon a row of pegs on the wall, and as soon as the boy was arrayed in his own clothing, hat and overcoat, they hurried from the theater into Crossby street.

"We will hide in a doorway until the supe comes out," said Roddy, hurriedly, "and then we can follow him, and discover if he don't go to meet Bull. I saw the old bald-headed villain in the audience, Pippo, and when I came out in the last act, I saw the most beastly look cross his face—he ran his fingers through the hair over his right ear, as if overwhelmed with disappointment and fury—seized his old plug hat and green umbrella, and jerking himself to his feet, he suddenly rushed out."

"Thinka youa getit killa!" said Ravelli with a chuckle.

"He acted as if he was powerfully affected at the sight of me."

Roddy kept his glance fixed upon the stage door, closely scrutinizing every one who emerged, and after a while he started, clutched Pippo by the arm, and drawing back close to the door they were leaning against, he whispered:

"Here he comes, Pippo! Be careful, or he will see us!"

They both drew as far back as possible, and an instant later the very tough-looking individual with tight pants on and a pea-jacket over his red flannel shirt, came slouching along, with a cap upon his down-bent head and his hands thrust into his pants pockets.

He passed close by the two watchers without seeing them, and they fairly held their breath lest he might hear it.

A moment later he was some distance off, and they cautiously emerged from their place of concealment, and followed after him.

He went along several blocks, and just as he was about to enter the saloon where Mr. Bull had made a rendezvous to meet him, the actor suddenly emerged from the resort. He whispered to the man a moment.

Then he hurried away. The super turned down a side street

and made his way to the Bowery, pursued by the two silent followers.

When he got to the corner of Hester street, he went into a saloon, and Roddy glided up to the door and peeped in over the top of the half shades.

He saw the man walk toward the back of the saloon and enter a small compartment at the side. There were two such places in the saloon, the one the man entered opening on the barroom, and the one next to its having an entrance from the side street.

Upon seeing this, Roddy beckoned to Pippo to follow him.

They then made their way to the side entrance and went in.

The compartments were only small ground-glass partitions about eight feet high, the fronts of which had small windows facing the barroom, through which people in the place could have their drinks in privacy.

The place in which Roddy and Pippo found themselves contained a table and a couple of chairs, and they had no doubt that the other was similarly furnished. Ringing a hand-bell, Roddy ordered a couple of sodas in a low tone, he and Pippo drank them, then Pippo got under the table.

Roddy opened the side door after the waiter took the two glasses away, shut it with a bang, and noiselessly slipped back and crouched under the table with Pippo. He wanted to leave the impression upon the man in the next compartment that they had gone out after getting their drinks. It was lucky they were safely hidden from view, for no sooner was Roddy hidden under the table beside his companion, when the man in the other compartment stood up on a chair and peeped over the top of the partition. Seeing the place apparently empty, he got down again, his face disappearing and the two listeners heard him call for a glass of rum.

Shortly afterward they heard somebody go in from the saloon and join him.

"Hello, my boy," said the well-known accents of Mr. Bull, "you beat me, I see."

"Yair. Wot did yer 'spect me ter do; crawl along an' freeze?"

"Not quite. You know why I sent you here. I was afraid you might have been suspected of trying to kill the boy. Then some one might have followed you."

"Yair. But ther manager don't 'spect who it wuz among us. When I seen them save him from ther lion, I put a bullet in one o' ther super's pistols, an' he nearly killed ther boy."

"But failed after all!" growled Bull, with a muttered imprecation.

"Pippo!" muttered Roddy, softly, as he nudged his companion, "you hear that? They did it!"

The old Italian nodded and held up his finger enjoining silence.

"Wot's ter be did now?" queried the tough-looking super, after a short silence, during which Bull ordered a bottle of liquor and helped himself several times in succession.

"Do? What shall we do? I'll tell you. The boy must be gotten rid of. His father left a big fortune which I am trying to get. You must work for me. Here is that money I owe you."

"Ah!" thought Roddy. "He has stolen Morris Hardcastle's plan and means to work it out."

"I had ten thousand dollars," said Bull, "but gambled it nearly all away. There is a chance for me to make a big stake now. A woman is in the case, though. Her name is Hattie Gray. She is Roddy's stepmother, and a half-sister to Morris Hardcastle."

"Der feller wot yer tole me as fust tried ter git rid o' der boy?" asked the super.

"Ah!" thought Roddy, "so that's her name? No wonder I could not find it in the directory!"

"Yes. Hardcastle's son is in care of Wildrake, the manager. We must get him to impersonate the missing heir again. But before that can be done, Hattie Gray must be taken away and put in some place where she cannot interfere with my plans. Young Hardcastle's agreed already."

"An' I know jist where she can be hid, if money is planked down fur it. My father's got a——"

"Oh, you mean Denny Fagin's place—the Cobweb, in Five Points?" interrupted Bull. "Next to the undertaking shop."

"Yair. Even der p'lice don't trouble dat place much," replied the super.

"Then we will try to abduct the woman to-night and carry her there. We will not have much trouble, for she is an invalid. Once there we can hold her, get young Hardcastle to claim and get Roddy's money, and then we will have our share of the plunder."

"Dat settles it," said the super. "I'm ready ter do der job."

"Then as the bottle is empty and I have one drink left, here's to the success of our plans."

"And now that I've discovered the woman—my stepmother," said Roddy as the two men arose and went out, "I'll follow you and see if I cannot thwart your designs!"

And followed by Pippo, the boy hurried from the saloon after the two plotters.

CHAPTER IX.

MRS. RANDOM.

After leaving the saloon on the corner of Bowery and Hester street, in pursuit of Bradford Bull and the super, Roddy and the old Italian saw the actor and his accomplice board a Third avenue car going uptown.

The night was very clear, and excessively cold, yet the two plotters stood on the front platform of the car. This suited Roddy and his friend to perfection, for it gave them an opportunity of getting on the rear platform of the same car.

"Pippo," exclaimed the boy delightedly, "I am in luck to-night. First of all I escaped the lion under the theater, then I escaped the assassin's bullet—and then by following that super to the saloon from the theater, I have been able to discover not only who the rascals were who tried to take my life, but also the name of my stepmother, and the plot these villains are hatching. We must strive to balk them if we can."

"We notit de letta steala de woman, an' bringa to de Cobweb," said Pippo, keeping his glance fixed upon the plotters by peeping through the glass windows of the car. "Ifa de son of Morris Hardcastle he plota de game, too, we stopa de racket."

"The young villain was coached in his part by his father, no doubt," said Roddy, "and now that Bull has broached the same plot to him he needs no rehearsal. I wonder if he knows what Bull did with his father?"

"I guessa he notit de knowa, or makit de kick."

"And that super is Denny Fagin's son! He don't know that his father is gone on the Random Lass, either. How surprised the villains will be when they find us on their track to upset their plans! If they once abduct Hattie Gray, and get her in that detestable Five Points resort, all the police in New York could not get her out again. It is a terrible place. I once lived there with Bull when I imagined he was my stepfather. That was before I discovered that Morris Hardcastle paid him \$500 a year to keep me in hiding for the past twelve years. But we can follow them, learn where my stepmother lives, and apprise her of her danger before they can execute their design."

Pippo nodded his gray head acquiescingly.

"Then," continued Roddy, "I will make my identity known to her, and tell her all that has been plotted and done against her and myself by these wretches, who want to cheat me out of my division of the half million my father left. I'll have Bull in jail before long!"

"Carissima, yes!" assented Pippo, with a vigorous nod.

Bull and his companion rode up to Harlem on the front platform, and their pursuers saw them conversing in whispers, by bending close to each other's ears, so that the driver could not overhear what they said.

On the corner of Ninety-sixth street they alighted, and Roddy rode on with his friend until they walked down the street before they got off the car.

On an elevation above Third avenue stood an old house, half stone, half lumber, facing the avenue at an angle, the yard extending from Ninety-sixth to Ninety-seventh streets. It is there yet. There were some trees around it, and the rear view was not then interrupted by the brewery which now almost hides the river in the back.

The house is a double one, with an old-fashion door in the center.

Its windows are small, and the stone walls are painted white.

This was the residence of Hattie Gray, and a look of deep interest overspread Roddy's face as he contemplated it, and thought it must have been his birthplace.

At the present date the house looks old-fashioned, dingy and wretched; at that time it was considered a very handsome mansion.

"This must be the place, Pippo," said Roddy. "See, they've gone down Ninety-sixth street, and are walking up that side entrance toward that old well."

"Altro!" sharply interposed Ravelli, dragging Roddy back behind a tree. "De super——"

"Ah! He has parted from Bull, and is coming this way." They watched the man, and saw him cross the avenue and

ter a livery-stable near by. Bull, in the meanwhile, stood in a shadow by the well.

From the livery-stable the super went down the avenue to a drug store.

"See here, Pippo," restlessly muttered Roddy, "this inactivity won't do. We must bestir ourselves. If we remain here losing our time away they will succeed. You go after a policeman. I will then climb up that hill, and try to get into the house without being seen by Bradford Bull, alarm the lady, and you can come in with an officer, and catch the miscreants at the house, with the proof against them."

"Good!" replied Ravelli. "Take de cara dey notit de catch Roddy."

"Have no fear for me," reassuringly replied the boy.

Pippo nodded, glided away after the super, and Roddy crossed the street.

The actor could not see him from where he stood, as the boy went toward the Ninety-seventh street side. Secure from the observation of Mr. Bull, and wondering how he was going to get into the house, Roddy climbed over the iron rail fence.

Then he crept toward the house, and getting down in the sea he tried the basement door, but found it locked. He did not dare to knock, for fear of alarming the actor and putting him to flight.

Not a light shone in any of the windows.

He therefore concluded that the inmates of the house had retired.

Gliding up to one of the windows, he saw that it was secured by an ordinary common latch, and drawing out his pocket-knife, he opened the thinnest blade, shoved it up between the outer casing and moved the latch back.

Then he lifted up the sash, went through the window, and closed it down again.

He found himself enshrouded in impenetrable darkness, but when he raised the shades the clear, cold light of the frigid January night came in and dimly illumined the apartment, showing him that he was in a dining-room.

His heart began to palpitate a little faster as the idea occurred to him that if he was discovered by any of the inmates of the house before he could explain what brought him there they might imagine he was a burglar and shoot him.

The boy did not hesitate an instant, though, for he knew very well that his enemies would soon get into the house and accomplish their design.

Not daring to ignite a match, he groped his way to the hall door, opened it, and passed through. The utmost silence prevailed everywhere, giving him an uneasy feeling, but he cautiously made his way through the obscure hallway, and after finding the stairs he crept up through the darkness to the floor floor. Pausing to listen, and hearing nothing to alarm him, he proceeded on, and managed to find the second flight of stairs leading up to the bedrooms.

"I hope Pippo will manage to secure help," he muttered. "If he don't, the wretches will make their escape and we may be into trouble."

When he reached the hall above he saw a small window on the landing, which overlooked that part of the house where the actor had been standing by the well. Curious to see if he was yet there, he glided quietly over to the window, raised the yellow shade, and glanced out.

He had an uninterrupted view of the garden.

Not a trace of the actor or his accomplice was to be seen. But as Roddy's glance roved over near the path leading up to the house from the side street, a sight met his view that brought an unguarded cry of consternation from his lips.

Pippo was lying across the path on his back, either dead or senseless!

The old Italian's dark-clothed figure was plainly revealed in the clear starlight, his face as white as snow, and his figure very still and rigid.

"They have discovered him and laid him out," thought Roddy.

The boy did not know the real truth then, but his idea was wrong.

Unable to find a policeman, when Pippo saw the super leave the drug store and hurry toward the house he became panic-stricken for his pupil's safety, and followed the tough individual back. He saw a coach draw up beside the curb in the sixty-sixth street, but did not notice that the actor was watching him. While he was cautiously making his way toward the house, Bull stole up behind him, and dealt him a blow on the butt end of a revolver, that stretched the old man senseless in his tracks.

Seeing Pippo aroused the suspicions of the men, and they

looked around to see if the old Italian had any companions. Nobody appearing, they concluded that he had followed them alone, but this incident caused them to accelerate their movements a good deal, as they did not know what to expect next.

They were sure that some time must elapse before the Italian would regain consciousness, so they left him where he had fallen, produced a bunch of skeleton keys, and going around to the rear of the house, they began to force an entrance.

It was just after Pippo had fallen that Roddy saw him.

The cry he uttered had been most incautious, and he recoiled from the window with a noisy step that echoed loudly in the large, silent hall.

A moment afterward a door was thrown open, and a flood of light suddenly flashed out upon the dark hall and fell all around Roddy.

He uttered another cry, and glanced toward the open doorway.

Upon the threshold stood a woman attired in a dark velvet gown.

She was perhaps thirty-five years of age, and had a white, thin face, large and luminous black eyes, encircled by dark streaks, that lent them a hollow look, while upon her shoulders fell a thick mass of disheveled, raven-hued hair. A startled look was upon her white face, when her wide-spread eyes turned upon Roddy, and she opened her thin-lipped mouth as if about to scream. But seeing only a boy confronting her, a frown crossed her careworn face, she repressed the cry, and asked in surprised tones:

"Can this boy be a thief?"

"Excuse me, madam," said Roddy, hastily, as he recovered his assurance. "I am not a thief, but I have come here to warn you of a vile plot which was laid by a man named Bradford Bull to abduct you, aided by a ruffianly accomplice."

"Abduct me?" echoed the lady in astonishment. "What ridiculous story is this? You cannot deceive me. No honest person breaks into people's houses at dead of night in this manner. You must be a burglar. I shall scream for——"

"Hush!" interrupted Roddy. "Listen to me. Is not your name Hattie Gray?"

"Yes, that is my name. But I tell you——"

"Keep still! Do you know who I am? I will tell you. My name is Roderick Random."

"What?" exclaimed the amazed lady, with a violent start.

"You are my dead father's second wife—my stepmother—the half-sister of Morris Harcastle. You see I know you!" exclaimed Roddy.

"And this boy's face," murmured the lady, bending an earnest stare upon the call-boy; "how like the countenance of my husband! It is the exact image."

"See here," said Roddy. "Your stepbrother, Harcastle, tried to palm his own son on you for me, as he had placed me in care of Bradford Bull. The actor sent your brother away on a ship, and Bull wants to get you and I out of the way so that he can get Harcastle's son as your brother did to impersonate me, and thereby lay claim to the property my father left me."

The lady gazed at Roddy in bewildering surprise, and faintly articulated:

"What—what is all this you are telling me?"

"Let me finish—we have no time to lose," said Roddy, grasping the balustrade nervously, while the lady clutched at the door casing. "Bull knows that you repudiated Harcastle's claim when he produced his son and said he was me. Therefore he wants to get you out of the way until he can, with the son of Harcastle, force my claim and get possession of the money. If you are not restrained you would refute his claim as false; hence he wants to abduct you until he has accomplished his purpose."

"Oh," muttered the lady, clasping her hands, "what villainy is all this?"

"To let you better understand how desperately determined this man is," continued Roddy, in rapid tones, "I wish to inform you that he is upon the premises now with an accomplice to carry out his design. You are to be carried away in a coach this very night, and kept secluded in a vile resort in the Five Points. The men are at this moment trying to get into the house. I have come here to warn you."

"And I, you little wretch, am here to kill you!" hissed a voice behind Roddy.

He uttered a cry, wheeled around, and sprang back.

At the head of the stairs stood Bradford Bull!

Behind him, several steps further down, was his hireling in the obscurity.

The actor had a terribly malignant scowl upon his face, and was shaking his fist at the boy in a paroxysm of the most demoniacal fury. He could not imagine how the boy and his teacher happened to be upon the scene.

Roddy was fairly thunderstruck.

He did not think that his enemy had yet gained ingress to the house. Yet there was the shabby rascal confronting him, and the boy realized that he was in a very dangerous position, and almost at the mercy of the others. Pippo was disabled and lying in the garden utterly senseless; Roddy could therefore expect no assistance from him.

Moreover, the woman was not to be counted on, and as Ravelli had been unable to find a policeman, no succor could be expected from the law's agents, no matter what might occur!

"Oh," muttered the boy in alarm. "He is here!"

Mrs. Random uttered a piercing shriek as her glance fell upon the two shadowy forms coming up the stairs, and she reeled back into the room, her white face blanching with fear, her large eyes distended, and a fearful fit of trembling convulsing her weak figure as she shut the door.

She had been an invalid so long that she was not very strong.

"We are betrayed!" hissed Bull, springing up on the landing. "This boy has almost thwarted me again. The woman knows him now, but all is not lost yet. Before any further harm can be done we will overpower them. Ah! a door opens—there comes a servant. Run, Fagin! Attend to that domestic before she alarms the whole neighborhood with her cries. I will attend to the woman and the boy. Use the chloroform you got at the druggist's."

"Back!" cried Roddy. "Stand back or I'll——"

"Bah! a fig for your threats!" sneered Bull, contemptuously.

Roddy seized a chair and brought it down upon his enemy's head with a resounding crash that elicited a malediction from the furious actor.

The next instant, though, the boy received a crushing blow and, uttering a groan, he fell over upon his back on the floor!

CHAPTER X.

THE WILL.

The moment Roddy fell Bradford Bull rushed through the hall, rubbing his sore head, and hurled his lanky body against the door which Mrs. Random had closed.

It burst open with a loud crash and the actor sprang into the apartment. A woman servant had run out in the hall, alarmed by the cry her mistress uttered and the noise made by the invaders.

The very tough young Fagin had provided himself with a vial of chloroform, and spilling some of the contents upon his handkerchief he ran up to the servant and, seizing her in his arms, he clapped the handkerchief to her nostrils. The moment she inhaled the stupefying fumes she fell back fast asleep, and the miscreant laid her down upon the floor and then hurried into Mrs. Random's bedroom after his employer.

It was an ordinary sleeping apartment, tastefully furnished, and was warmed by a glowing stove. In the middle of the room the actor was struggling with the lady. Fagin went to his employer's assistance, and being prepared for just such an emergency, between the two they bound and gagged Mrs. Random and tied her to a bed-post.

The poor lady was in a terrible condition of fright and nervousness.

The excitement so overwhelmed her she was on the eve of fainting.

"At last!" exclaimed Bull, panting, when they had rendered the lady helpless. "She can now do us no harm, Fagin. And you, madam, need have no fear. We do not intend to offer you any violence beyond that to which we were just forced. It pains me, I assure you upon my word as a gentleman and a scholar, madam, it absolutely pains me to think of the indignity we have perpetrated. Excuse us, I beseech you. We could not help it."

Mrs. Random was apparently somewhat reassured by the bland suavity of the glib spoken rascal. She saw very plainly that Roddy had spoken the truth.

"If they mean to abduct me," she argued to herself, "I need have no fear. They are ruffianly-looking men, but then they have no object in doing me any real injury. All they want is to secure themselves from molestation while they rob me and my husband's son—if, indeed, the boy is really Roderick Random—the child whom my false-hearted half brother hid away, so that he could try to impose upon me with his own offspring!"

Young Fagin sat down upon the edge of the bed, and the ever-thirsty Mr. Bull pulled his ever-full flask from his hip-pocket, with the remark:

"By the gods of war, Fagin, I'm winded!"

"An' I'm dryer dan a fish. Gimme swig, gwan," said Fagin.

"Certainly—certainly," said Mr. Bull, as he pulled out the cork, held the bottle up to the light, shut one of his watery eyes and glared through the flask with the other. "Only wait until I wet my whistle, my boy. Age before beauty, as the proverb says, and I'm not sure but what this rye may be Bourbon. Let me see."

He placed the bottle to his lips, rolled up his eyes and began to gulp.

The tough individual eyed him with a longing expression, and growled:

"Hull on, ole feller; d'yer want'er guzzle der bottom o' der bulldog?"

"Excellent stuff—real rye," observed Mr. Bull, smacking his lips and scratching the end of his long, red nose with his thumb. "And now, my excellent young friend, let me tell you we have no time to waste in drinking. Our business here is too important. You know that as well as I do, and—— But excuse my forgetfulness. I was so impolite as to drink without proposing your health. Consequently I must rectify the error. Let me hope that you will forgive me, and here are my regards."

Again the flask was tipped up at an acute angle, and the liquor began to wobble into his capacious mouth, while he condescendingly winked at his companion several times over the top of the amber-colored bottle.

"But—ha!" said he, a moment later, suddenly lowering his flask, and starting back so abruptly as to cause his companion to spring up in alarm. "I am forgetting myself! This will never do, Fagin! There are some very valuable papers in this woman's possession, such as her dear departed husband's last will and testament. Without the aforesaid documents in our possession we would have the utmost difficulty to prove Roderick Random's claim. Besides that, my boy, there may be sundry other things of need to us which Mr. Morris Hardcastle possessed, for he resided here, you know. I have reference to any receipts and so forth, belonging to me for the keep of his ward—very condemning papers, if once brought to light in the face of our future movements. We must therefore secure them. Hence, why should we muddle our brains with fire-water? It would be a most unwise plan, I am sure."

"But I want a pull at that bulldog," sullenly said Fagin.

"Nonsense!" blandly replied Mr. Bull, as he poked the cork into the flask, and dropped it very slyly into his coat-tail pocket. "Nonsense, dear boy. I wouldn't permit it under any circumstances just now. We must keep level heads, or we might make a blunder that would send us to jail, don't you comprehend?"

Mr. Fagin was not satisfied, but he did not say so as he arose.

He simply uttered a sort of savage growl, and asked in his toughest tones:

"Well—what d'yer want, yer ole hamfatter?"

Mr. Bull only smiled serenely, and vented a chuckle, as he realized that he had made Fagin's mouth water and saved himself another drink. He did not mind the allusion to "hamfatter," for all the professionals called him by that odious epithet. He scorned them for it, though, in his tragic so and stuck up his nose at the derogation it implied. So he ignored the remark and replied:

"I want you to help me search these apartments for all legal-looking documents you may run across, do you understand? While you are ransacking the other room I will search through this one. And now—go!"

He pointed at a door of communication, and Mr. Fagin swaggered out of the room with a lofty look of disdain and disgust upon his red face.

The moment the door closed upon him Mr. Bull gazed around speculatively, pulled his old and rusty plug hat down over his eyes, scrutinized Mrs. Random an instant, and then suddenly hauled the flask out of his pocket to refresh his memory.

"I fooled the young rooster very sharply out of this drink, but hardly was this idea in his mind when the door opened again, Mr. Fagin poked his head in, and then let drive with an old shoe."

It hit the flask, knocked it flying across the room with one of the few teeth in the actor's big mouth, and as a roar of rage and mortification burst from Mr. Bull's lips, his companion became convulsed with a grin, and disappeared.

The actor ripped out an expletive, shook his skinny fist at the door, and gazed dolefully at the liquor which poured

of the bottle on the floor. But he did not waste any time at reviling his companion. He had overheard nearly all Roddy told Mrs. Random, and knew very well that now that an explanation had come about he would have to successfully end the scheme he had embarked in, or run the risk of going to prison. It puzzled him to account for Roddy and Pippo's knowledge of his plans, and their presence upon the scene; but as he could form no solution to the mystery, he did not speculate over it. Hearing his companion busy in the next room, he turned toward Mrs. Random with the remark:

"Now see here, madam, you know we are peaceable men, who do not want to go to extremes in carrying out our purpose. Therefore I want you to truthfully reply to a question I am going to ask you. I will not argue this case—the facts of the present situation speak for themselves. You are hopelessly in our power, with nobody handy to help you."

He fished a small vial from his pocket, held it up, and then continued:

"This tiny bottle contains chloroform. I am going to release you of the gag, so you can speak. In the meantime, I will hold this vial in readiness to stupefy you in case you attempt to scream for help, in a fit of treachery."

As he said this he unfastened the handkerchief from her mouth.

Mrs. Random uttered a suppressed groan.

"Oh, you inhuman monster, to treat a sick woman this way," she cried, bitterly.

"Ha! You are sick? I did not know it," said the actor, simulating the most intense surprise, although the hypocrite knew very well that she had been an invalid nearly all her life. "Too bad, I declare," he went on, in sorrowful tones, "and you assuredly must consider us a pair of brutal wretches. It is not so, though, madam, I assure you upon the word of a gentleman who has seen better days. You must not judge by appearances. I admit that I look shabby and seedy and ill-flavored, but do not be deceived. Beneath this threadbare coat beats a gallant heart—a heart the blood of which is only coursing for the ladies—the dear gentle sex—"

"Rascal!" interrupted Mrs. Random in disgust. "Release me!"

"I beg pardon, madam, you are addressing a gentleman," loftily said Mr. Bull, drawing his skinny legs up and thumping his bony chest so hard he burst a button off of his tight black frock coat. "Do not insult me. I mean to treat you as a lady. Now tell me where you have hidden your husband's will by which he bequeaths to Roderick Random one-half of his legacy? You probably believe the calumnies of the viperish young scoundrel whom you met in the hall. Let me beg and implore you to give no credence to his infernal lies. He is a most notorious reprobate. His words are as false as the—as false as the wind. Don't you believe him. He wanted to impose upon you. Yes, he did, upon my soul! He is no more your stepson than I am, and I am sure I am bold enough to be your grandfather, my dear. So you see he lied. But tell me, where is the paper?"

"I shall not tell you!" said Mrs. Random, with grim determination.

"Oh, I say! Come now—don't be obstinate!" expostulated Bull, insinuatingly.

"You can get no information from me, you wretch!"

"Dear me! How fiery you have become all of a sudden! By the living Jingo, you've got a violent temper! I am glad am not your husband, ma'am!" said Bull.

He saw that she was resolved upon the course she was pursuing, so he picked up the gag from the floor and pulled out his vial again, hoping to intimidate her.

"Ah!" exclaimed Mrs. Random, with a shudder. "You mean drug me!"

"Madam—I cannot—absolutely cannot express the pain it causes me," said Bull, in mournful tones, as he placed his hand over his heart and dolefully shook his head, "but you have surmised the object of my intention. If we cannot induce you by soft suasion to confess, we must render you helpless and prosecute the search for the missing papers in person. You observe, I say we; by which, madam, you notice that I do not exactly hold myself blameless for this harsh treatment, but wish to modify the just wrath you must entertain by recalling to your mind that I am not alone to blame for my actions. My coarse-featured friend and companion—"

"Spare yourself any further useless talk," sharply interrupted the bound woman, in accents of anger and torture. "I will confess to you in order to prevent you stupefying me with your drug. Can I rely upon that as a bargain?"

"Despite my shabby coat," said Bull with a bow, "I told you I am a gentleman. Tell me where I can find the papers, and

promise not to raise any disturbance, and I swear to you that no harm shall befall you."

"I accept your word. In the bottom drawer of that bureau you will find a small jewelery casket. Lift out the top tray," said Mrs. Random, "and in the bottom you will find the papers you are in search of."

"Madam, I thank you most humbly from the bottom of my heart," said Bull, with a profound bow and a grand flourish of his hand.

The lady cast an execrating glance full of contempt and disgust upon the old rascal and did not reply. Then Bull opened the drawer, drew out the casket and extracted the papers he wanted. A thrill of joy passed over him as he swept a swift, keen glance upon them, gathered their purport, and thrust them into the breast pocket of his old black coat.

"Just the papers I'm after," he chuckled, gleefully. "And, ah, here comes my friend again, with a countenance lit up as if by midday sunbeams."

At the same moment that the dive-keeper's son entered from the other room Roddy peered into the apartment, around the door jamb.

He had recovered from the effect of the blow, and having risen, had crept to the threshold, just in time to see Bull appropriate the papers from the jewelery casket.

"The villains! They have succeeded!" muttered the boy.

"Well, my sagacious tenderfoot, what success?" cried Bull.

"I've got 'em, I guess!" replied Fagin. "Found 'em in a box in der closet."

He handed the actor a packet of papers, which he hastily examined.

"Eureka!" exclaimed Bull, beaming all over with smiles. "Just the papers. We're in luck."

At this moment Fagin saw Roddy, and he uttered a cry of alarm.

"De boy's come to!" he exclaimed, "an' dere he is in der doorway!"

"Down him!" cried the actor. "Quick! I'll carry the woman out!"

The tough super dashed toward the door, and Bull rushed up to Mrs. Random, and before the poor woman could utter a remonstrance he chloroformed her, and unfastening her bindings, he seized her in his arms and hurried out of the room.

Seeing he was discovered, Roddy dashed down the stairs, pursued by Fagin.

When he reached the lower floor he found the back door open, through which the two men had entered, and he ran out into the yard. He intended to call for the police as soon as he reached the street. Glancing over to where he had seen his old friend Ravelli lying, he was astonished to notice that the old Italian was gone.

On came Fagin, bent on injuring him, and Roddy turned to run across the yard just as Bull ran out of the house with the unconscious form of Mrs. Random in his arms. The coach was awaiting the rascals down in Ninety-sixth street yet.

Roddy ran like a deer, and then glanced back over his shoulder.

It was most unfortunate that he did so, for the next instant there came a crash, and he ran violently against the casing around the old well.

The rotten boards were crushed in like so much paper, and Roddy uttered a loud cry and pitched headforemost down the well.

A moment later Bradford Bull, who saw what had happened with feelings of the utmost joy, joined his companion in crime, and together they hurried down to the street with the senseless lady. Springing into the coach, they slammed the door, the horses dashed away, and a moment later they disappeared around the corner into Third avenue with their victim.

CHAPTER XI.

THE INJUNCTION.

Pippo Ravelli lay across the path in the yard of Mrs. Random's house in a senseless condition until a few minutes before young Fagin chased Roddy out of the house. The blow which Bradford Bull dealt the old Italian had been a pretty hard one, but when he recovered consciousness he sat up and recollected all that transpired immediately. Rising to his feet he walked over to a little summer-house against which he leaned for a moment, recovering his faculties and wondering what had become of Roddy. It was then that he saw the boy run out of the back door of the house. Pippo would have followed the super, to aid his pupil, had he not seen Bradford

Bull emerge just then carrying the chloroformed Mrs. Random in his arms.

Crouching back out of sight, but in a position from which he could observe all that transpired, Pippo was horrified to see Roddy strike the rotten boards around the old well and fall headforemost down the hole.

The old Italian sprang from his cover, but the rascals had gotten into Ninety-sixth street with the senseless lady, jumped in the waiting coach, and were carried around into Third avenue before he moved a dozen paces.

Pippo did not know that Roddy met his stepmother before she was abducted, and exposed his identity to her, nor did he know that Bull and his companion had succeeded in securing Roger Random's will and sundry other papers appertaining to Morris Hardecastle.

All that now troubled him was Roddy's fate.

Running over to the well, he stretched himself flat on the ground and peered over the edge down the dark abyss and listened.

He saw no sign of the boy, heard no noise, and could only see the long bucket-rope attached to a rusty iron wheel overhead.

"Roddy! Roddy!" cried the old man, in anguished tones.

Only the hollow echoes of his own voice came up out of the dark well in reply, and Pippo's heart sank within him with a dull woe as he thought that Roddy must be lying dead at the bottom of the gloomy pit.

Clearly, if the boy was capable he would have answered that cry; and Pippo began to work himself up into a fever of excitement over it.

He imagined that Roddy's fall had killed him.

He was not satisfied, though, so he prepared to descend into the well and see.

There was a bucket on each end of the rope—one rising while the other descended—and standing in the bucket that was up at the time, he caught hold of that part of the rope to which the other bucket was attached, and slowly lowered himself down the hole. In this way he descended about twenty feet, when he came to a cross beam set in the masonry to brace it up.

Upon the plank lay the body of the boy, one of his legs so wedged in between the log and the bricks that he could fall no further.

He was insensible; indeed, Pippo imagined he was dead.

The old Italian seized his pupil, and extracted him from his dangerous position. By exerting all his strength he lifted Roddy over his shoulder, got in the bucket again, and hauling on the rope of the bucket that was down, he managed, with a good deal of difficulty, to raise the bucket they were in to the surface. Then he got out, and laid the boy on the cold ground.

There was a swollen lump on Roddy's head, showing where he struck when he fell down the well. Otherwise, he seemed to be uninjured.

Pippo ran over to Third avenue, and was lucky enough to secure a cab. He then conveyed the unconscious boy to his Cherry street apartments.

By the time they got home Roddy recovered his senses, and explanations passed between them. They were sure that Mrs. Random had been carried to "The Cobweb" in the Five Points. But as nothing could be done to help her that night, they retired to rest. The following day was the first of February, and they found a snowstorm covering the earth with a mantle of white.

Roddy was a good deal shaken up by his rough experience, but he got out of bed early in the morning, and went with Pippo to the nearest police station, where he told the captain in charge what had occurred.

That official promised to send a posse of officers to rescue Mrs. Random, and detailed a ward detective to go up to the Ninety-sixth street house to view the premises, attend to the drugged servant, and discover the extent of the miscreant's rascality. There was a rehearsal at the Olympic in the afternoon, which Roddy attended, and in the night, although suffering from a severe headache, he went to the theater and repeated his success in the role of "The Boy King" before a densely crowded house.

Fagin did not appear as a super that night, nor at any time during the rest of the week. On the second day Roddy heard from the police captain that a raid was made on "The Cobweb," but no trace of Mrs. Random was found. This led him to believe that his enemies had secluded the lady in some other retreat. So the week rolled by, until the last day of the performance came.

But it was evident the play could not go on much longer,

as Wildrake's debts were too heavy. So on the night of the last performance an injunction was put on the play and the show was obliged to close.

Roddy had saved Jerry Wildrake several thousand dollars, and his last act on the stage that night settled his future career as an actor.

But, having no engagement, Roddy was obliged the following week to return to the stage as call-boy again, for the "Boy King" was prohibited on the American boards.

CHAPTER XII.

THE COBWEB.

A variety troupe had the Olympic one night a short time after the call-boy lost his position as an actor, and Roddy was assisting in a farce that was to finish the show. The character he had assumed was a "bit" or utility part—that of a tramp—who was characterized by an abnormal appetite and a deadly fear of bulldogs. He was attired in a ragged suit of clothing, an old and tattered blue flannel shirt, a pair of brogans, a wig of matted hair, and his face was made up to appear as if it was tanned by the sun, bloated by drink and never washed. He wore false eye-brows, his hands and neck were smeared with soot, and upon his head he wore a shapeless old felt hat.

In short, he looked like a veritable tramp from heels to crown.

Through the carelessness of an actress in her dressing-room the theater was set on fire. Fortunately all the audience managed to escape without a panic or any injury, and the actors got out on Crosby street through the stage door.

The engines soon arrived upon the scene and put the fire out before it could do much damage.

None of the actors had time to abandon their stage make-up when the fire broke out, and they all stood on the sidewalk looking like a band of ragamuffins, while the engines and firemen were extinguishing the flames in the theater. It was a very dark night, the sky wearing a threatening aspect, a cold wind blowing over the gray pavements, and fluttering the lights in the street lamps. A tremendous crowd began to gather about the theater to watch the conflagration, and to escape the mob Roddy strolled to the corner of East Houston street with one of the actors.

The moment they reached the corner, a cab came dashing by.

"Save me! Help! Help! Help!" shrieked a woman's voice in the vehicle.

The tones were smothered, and only audible a few feet away, but Roddy and the actor heard them, and filled with startled amazement, they wheeled around, and stared at the flying cab. There was a lamp-post on the corner where they stood, and as the vehicle rushed past, the lamplight fell upon the window and revealed two faces for a brief interval in the cab.

They were the faces of Mrs. Random and Bradford Bull.

A cry of surprise escaped Roddy as he recognized them.

The next instant, to the surprise of his companion, he dashed after the cab at the top of his speed, and catching up to the vehicle, he caught hold of the rear straps and swung himself upon the hind axle, unseen by the driver.

"Merciful Providence!" muttered the boy, as the cab rapidly jolted over the rough cobblestones, "what new rascality is Bull up to? But perhaps he is simply bringing Mrs. Random from her hiding-place to the 'Cobweb,' now that he has no more fear of police interference. I can soon ascertain the truth, though, and then, with the aid of Heaven, I'll do my utmost to rescue the poor lady from the power of the black-hearted rascal!"

It was as Roddy surmised—the cab proceeded to the Five Points, and paused before a large frame building near the converging point of Baxter street.

The house was very old, and built somewhat after the style of the old Brewery, upon the site of which the Five Points Mission House now stands.

The "Cobweb" was a wooden tenement, weather-beaten and tottering on rotten foundations. There was not a vestige of paint, a whole pane of glass, nor anything but filth about the structure, and it contained dark and winding alleys, and lanes as forbidding as the portals of the lower regions, wherein the rascals who infested this sink of vice could dispose of their victims and store their ill-gotten booty. Seven-tenths of the surrounding stores were liquor saloons, and nine-tenths of the population were criminals.

It made Roddy shudder for the safety of his stepmother, for he had once lived in the "Cobweb," knew from experience what a terrible place it was, and what a villainous crew infested it. Luckily, though, the boy had on a stage make-up

that accorded well with the lawless characters who lived there, and being proficient at carrying out the character he delineated on the stage, he had no fear but what he could pass muster for one of the habitués of the place. By so doing he could penetrate that hive of evil and trace the abducted lady to the quarters Bradford Bull had designated for her. Before the cab stopped, the boy alighted, and slunk behind a coal-bin in front of a foul-odored grocery store, from where he could watch all that happened. He wished he had Pippo with him just then, but being alone, he did not lose much time in useless regrets. The cab drew up before the groggery, on the ground floor of the "Cobweb," the door opened and by the dim light emanating from the saloon's dirty windows Roddy saw the actor alight from the vehicle, carrying the inanimate form of Mrs. Random in his arms. He entered the building, and the cab then rolled away a moment later.

Roddy stole across the filthy street like a shadow, and glided into a dark alleyway, wherein Bradford Bull had plunged with his burden. There was a dim light glowing in back from what looked like a window in a building in the rear of the brick-paved alley.

At the side of the building was a stoop, upon which opened a side door in the house. Bull had gone through this door with his burden, and the boy followed him. Once inside, Roddy found himself in a dark hall. He heard a door open, felt a cold draught strike him laden with a nauseous and musty odor, and his cheeks paled as he muttered:

"He is bringing her down to the dungeon."

Roddy shuddered, and crept after the man.

He felt that once the poor woman was confined in the cellar of the "Cobweb" it would require the most superhuman efforts to save her from her enemies.

The footsteps of Bull clattering on the stairs died away.

Then Roddy went down after the actor.

When he reached the foot of the stair-case he saw the actor light a lantern.

The cellar was filled with bales and bundles and barrels and casks.

Upon one of these casks laid a man fast asleep.

He was a repulsive-looking wretch, and held a club in his hand; but it was evident at a glance upon his bloated face that he was stupid from excess of drink. This rascal was the guardian of the stolen goods stored in the vile cellar. He seldom saw the light of day, and only amused himself by gorging himself with the food and liquor brought to him by a servant.

The actor glanced at him, growled something about his carelessness, and lifting up a trap-door in a corner of the cellar, he descended another flight of stairs into a sub-cellar. Roddy felt intensely relieved to see the watchman asleep, for when sober and awake not one of the thousands of rats infesting the place could fit across the floor without his cognizance.

No one coming from the light of the upper world could see in the cellar without a lantern, lamp or candle; but the watchman had the owl-like propensity of seeing in the dark. Therefore he could ordinarily detect the approach of any one without being seen himself, and attack an intruder in the darkness, and level him with the club he carried before the interloper could prosecute any design against the place.

It was on account of this monster that Roddy despaired of being of any service to his stepmother once she was in the power of the abhorrent wretch.

Luckily, though, he had succumbed to his insensate thirst for gin that night.

Roddy followed the actor down into the cellar.

It contained many pillars and posts, archways and bins, and at one side was a row of stone cells with rusty, iron-barred doors, each of which was secured with a ponderous padlock on the outside.

The place was filled with rats, cobwebs and huge spiders, a stifling atmosphere, and the most intense gloom. There was a huge brick structure at the other side of the place with a plank door set in the masonry across the face of which were several broad bands, all rusted.

A singular gurgling and murmuring sound emanated from the huge convex of masonry, and the foulest stench oozed out from between huge cracks in the side, with a slimy, black, muddy matter.

It was a subway sewer main, and the fetid gases it emitted were enough to kill a much more healthy person than Mrs. Random.

Having locked the unfortunate woman in one of the damp and reeking cells, the actor dropped the key into his pocket and seized the lantern.

Seeing him coming toward the stairs, Roddy beat a hasty retreat.

Up the stairs he went, through the trap-door and across the cellar.

Then he hastily made his way up into the dark hall again, where he paused beside the door and listened intently to Bull, who was shouting at the watchman to awaken him.

When the actor began to ascend the stairs, Roddy hastened through the hallway, and turning the knob of a door, he entered the "Cobweb" saloon.

Behind the small, dingy bar stood young Fagin, dealing out spirits to a crew of evil-faced ruffians who thronged the small room. Fagin owned the saloon.

He did not notice Roddy, and the boy glided over to the stove in a corner of the apartment, behind which he ensconced himself on a wooden bench, and furtively watched the door for Bull to come in.

The floor of the saloon was strewn with sawdust, and there were several grimy benches, tables and wooden chairs scattered about. The bar itself was as wretched an arrangement as the rest of the fixtures of the vile place, and the air was so thick with rank tobacco smoke, it was hard to see through it.

Several of the thieves glanced at Roddy, but upon seeing that he was as villainous looking as themselves, they paid no further attention to him, but resumed their boisterous, slangy talk amid their frequent potations.

In a few minutes Bradford Bull came in, and after nodding fraternally to the tough characters standing around, he turned to Fagin with:

"I got her out of the old dive down by the river, brought her here in a cab, and, sir, I have her locked in the dungeon, Mr. Fagin, my very dear sir."

"Good enough," replied the rascally super, nodding approvingly.

"I am going to remain here to-night," continued the actor, tapping the point of his boot with his green umbrella and rubbing the bosom of his rusty black frock coat with the other hand, "and to-morrow I commence operations to secure the money by the aid of young Hardecastle, my dear sir."

This was said right out before the others, without an attempt at reserve.

They only listened with idle curiosity, though, for they knew Bull's plans, and would not dream of interfering with the rep-robate actor in any rascality.

"I wonder," thought Roddy, "if I could not tackle him to-night, get the key of that dungeon from him, and try to get Mrs. Random out?"

He pondered a moment, and as Bull made no further reference that interested him, he glanced toward a dark green screen in the back, and muttered:

"Yes! That's the only way. I'll see the Old Goat, and hire a room from her."

The Old Goat was Fagin's mother, her dutiful son applying the opprobrious epithet to her as well as the rest of the out-laws who infested the place. Having resolved upon his course of action, Roddy glided out from behind the stove, hastily got his back turned to Bradford Bull, and walked with a shuffling gait behind the screen. It hid a doorway, through which he passed, and he found himself in a room wherein were congregated a huge crowd of young street gamins, who were following in the footsteps of the older thieves out in the barroom. They were fighting, quarreling, smoking, eating, swearing, drinking and practising many artful dodges which their experienced instructors exemplified. They glanced curiously at Roddy as he passed among them, passing comments, and knowing instantly that he was a stranger there. But he pressed on without paying any heed to the youthful sinners toward the further end of the dirty room.

The Old Goat, as they called Fagin's mother, sat in front of a fire, gazing at the flames, and chewing on her toothless gums in a reflective mood. She was bent double with old age, had on a rusty colored and very much tattered dress, her head was covered with an old white muslin cap, with a ruffle framing in her withered-up face, and upon her hooked nose she wore a pair of steel-rimmed eyeglasses. Roddy spoke to her familiarly and told her he wanted a room for the night upstairs. She did not know him, but imagining he was as lawless as the rest of the brood of young vipers in the room, she demanded a quarter, which the boy managed to fish up out of the pocket of his own pants underneath his stage costume, and gave her. Then she gave him a ticket, and he went up a flight of rickety stairs. A slovenly woman met him at their head, took his ticket, gave him a piece of tallow candle, and dragging a broom after her, she led him to one of a row of doors opening on the dimly illuminated hall.

It led into a bedroom as squallid as the rest of the house, which Roddy entered. There was no carpet on the dirty floor,

and the board walls were destitute of plaster or paper. A wretched looking cot stood at one side of the room, a three-legged stool beside it, and on the other side of the room was a wash-stand holding a tin basin and pitcher, over which hung a bit of cracked looking-glass. There was no sign of soap, towel or comb, nor any visible covering or pillow to the iron cot.

"This makes me think of old times, when Bull and I lived here," thought Roddy, with a wary look around, by the dull light of his candle. "And now to lay low until Bull comes upstairs. I have to watch for him."

He drew the stool over to the door, which he opened on a crack, and extinguishing his candle he sat down and commenced his vigil.

Several hours dragged tediously by; every little while somebody came up the stairs, entered a room, and after a while their snores and heavy breathing attested that they were overcome by slumber. Roddy peered out at them one after the other, and as a neighboring church or clock bell rang out three times, he began to fear that after all the actor was not coming up.

Then the listening boy heard unsteady footsteps mounting the carpetless stairs, and a hoarse, thick voice say in grumbling tones:

"You can hang me, sir, if I am not deuced unsteady in the legs."

"Ah, here he comes at last!" muttered Roddy, with a violent start.

There sounded a scuffle of footsteps in the hall, then a crash and a wild yell. It was followed by a good deal of swearing, and Roddy peeped out. He saw the actor trying to scramble to his feet. He couldn't get up, though, desperately hard as he tried, and finally he laid back and said something about going to sleep where he was. He changed his mind about it a moment later, though, and finding that he could not get on his long, thin legs again, he swore that he would get into his room anyhow, so he crept there on his hands and knees.

To Roddy's joy, he entered the room next to his own.

The boy heard him undressing, fling his things on the floor, and then the cot squeaked. Waiting until the actor's breathing betrayed the fact that he was wrapped in slumber, Roddy rapidly glided into his room. Bull's coat and vest lay on the floor with the umbrella, but he had his hat and shoes on. Feeling in the pocket of the coat, Roddy drew out the much coveted key and a package of papers. These he thrust into his pocket. He was just about to set the coat down again, when Bull's empty whisky bottle fell out of the tail pocket. It struck the floor with a loud crash and was shattered to fragments. Roddy uttered an involuntary cry of dismay and recoiled. The actor suddenly sat bolt upright in bed, glaring at him in bewildered surprise, and at the same instant the door opened and a man glided into the room behind Roddy!

CHAPTER XIII.

A STRUGGLE FOR LIBERTY.

As Bradford Bull sat up in his cot, Roddy recoiled against the wall.

Fortunately the boy had secured the packet of papers and the key to the dungeon under the "Cobweb" in which Mrs. Random was confined before the actor was awakened by the whisky flask falling from his pocket.

There was a candle burning on the washstand, and as the strange man glided into the room behind Roddy, he suddenly stooped and blew out the light.

Disguised as a tramp as Roddy was, from having been taking part in the farce on the Olympic stage before the theater was set on fire, Bull did not recognize the boy. Indeed, the vast amount of liquor he drank, down in the barroom of the dive, had so muddled his brains he was half stupid as he sat up and suddenly saw the candle extinguished.

Roddy turned around to see who had extinguished the candle.

No sooner had he done so, when he saw the dim, shadowy outlines of the man standing behind him.

The familiar appearance of the stranger impressed the boy strangely.

But before he could utter a word, he felt his arm seized, and the man pulled him out into the hall and closed the door.

In the hall a greasy lamp shed a dim glow upon the man and boy.

Roddy now had a good look at his companion.

"Why! by all that is wonderful," he cried, "it is Pippo!"

"Altro!" said the hoarse old Italian, holding up a finger

warningly, and uttering a subdued "Sch," as he drew the boy toward the stairs.

"What brought you here?" queried Roddy, in amazed tones.

"I metit an actor by de theater," said Pippo, in low tones. "He maka de tella me dat youa followit de carriage dat hava one mans an' one womans. I guessa dat it is de signor an' de signora, an' dey coma here; so, per bacco! I follow, an' justa coma in."

"It is as much as your life is worth to enter this den, Pippo."

"An' de signora, Roddy—de signora??"

"She is confined in a cell under the house, but I have the key."

"Good. Che! Wea getit de lady out!"

"But there is a watchman down there."

Pippo drew two revolvers from his pocket, and handed one to Roddy.

"Just the thing!" exclaimed the boy joyfully.

"Wea go downa de cellar now! Come on."

Roddy nodded, and they softly glided down the creaking stairs.

Upon passing through a hall running alongside of the room in which Roddy had met the old hag known as Fagin's mother they reached the cellar door, and paused to listen for the watchman.

Not a sound came up from the darkness below.

"We will have to proceed with extreme caution now," muttered Roddy.

"Hera de dark-lantern I hava my house."

"Good. Give it to me. I will go down first and see where the man is. You can then follow if the coast is clear, Pippo."

The Italian nodded, the boy took the lantern, and after arranging a code of signals, and pulling off his shoes, Roddy descended the stairs.

He went down so softly that not a sound was heard.

"So far so good!" he muttered, when he reached the cellar, and paused to listen. He unmasked the dark-lantern, and flashed its rays around.

The ugly-looking watchman seemed to be yet slumbering upon the casks, probably sleeping off his debauch of that afternoon.

Flashing the silent light up the stairs, he saw Pippo come stealthily down.

The boy displayed the figure of the sleeping watchman to him, and they then linked arms and flitted across the cellar like twin shadows.

Opening the trap-door in the floor, Roddy stationed his old friend on the topmost step, and softly made his way down through the opening.

The moment darkness again enshrouded the cellar, the apparently sleeping watchman opened his bloated eyes, and turned a keen and cruel glance toward where the two rescuers had disappeared.

He took a powerful grip on the club he carried, and sinking down upon his hands and knees, he began to crawl toward Pippo with the quiet stealth of a velvet-pawed cat.

In the meantime Roddy had descended into the sub-cellar, and by the light of the bull's-eye he found Mrs. Random's cell.

Producing the key which he had taken from Bradford Bull's pocket, he unlocked the door and entered the horrible dungeon.

Mrs. Random was as pale as death, and her eyes were red, as if from having been weeping. She recoiled when her glance fell on Roddy.

"Ah!" cried the poor lady, in anguished tones, "what new villainy is this?"

"Madam," replied Roddy, earnestly, "don't you know who I am?"

"Some rascally accomplice of Bradford or Bull or Morris Hardcastle——"

"No, no, no! I am Roderick Random, and I am here to rescue you."

"What? Can it be possible? Oh, your voice sounds familiar to me."

She approached and stared earnestly at the boy a moment.

"I just came from the theater in this disguise, madam," said the boy, "and I am aided by my old Italian friend Pippo Ravelli."

"Thank Heaven! my deliverance from this terrible place is at hand. The odors here would kill me if I remained much longer!"

She grasped the boy's hand, fervently pressed it, and together they left the cell and approached the stairs, Roddy telling her what she would have to do, and how he came there.

As they reached the foot of the stairs they received a startling surprise.

There came a sudden rush, the report of a revolver, and a strange, unnatural cry that pealed through the gloomy vault like the voice of some wild animal. The next instant something struck the stairs with a thud, and came rolling, tumbling and bumping down, each blow forcing from it the singular, inhuman tones.

"It is the watchman!" cried Roddy, springing back in alarm.

"Ave Maria!" came the voice of Pippo the next moment, as he hurried down the stairs after the speechless watchman. "I killa you! I killa you!" The man bounded to his feet, seized his club and rushed toward Roddy. His horrible face was contorted by a most repulsive look of rage, and his vicious eyes were flashing fire. He was tongue-tied.

The boy raised the bull's-eye lantern and turned the blinding light full in his face.

The wretch gave utterance to his strange cry again, threw up his arms, and staggered back, almost blinded by the intense glare.

He had attacked Pippo, aiming a terrific blow at the old Italian's head, up in the cellar. Unluckily for his murderous intention, Pippo heard his stealthy footsteps and sprang aside just as the club came down. Ravelli then fired at him, but missed his mark, seeing which he dealt the tongueless wretch a blow with his clenched fist, before he could recover the use of the club and knocked the watchman headforemost down through the trap-door.

"Pippo!" cried Roddy. "Tackle him! Quick!"

"Holda de lighta his eyes," admonished the Italian hoarsely.

They had the watchman at a great disadvantage.

Pippo stole up behind him and then sprang forward.

He seized the club, and still venting his strange cries, the watchman turned around in the height of his fury and began to struggle to regain possession of his weapon. Mrs. Random stepped aside out of Roddy's way, and the boy followed the ferocious watchman up, and kept flashing the light in his face.

Pippo was old but surprisingly strong.

They struggled around the sub-cellar, Roddy following them up step by step, with one of Pippo's revolvers in his hand.

As they neared the cell in which Mrs. Random had been confined Roddy suddenly darted forward and hurled his body against that of Pippo's antagonist. The man reeled backward, Pippo let go the club, and the next instant the fellow pitched over upon the floor of the cell.

Before he could arise Roddy swung the door shut and locked it.

The imprisoned watchman seized the bars, glared out at them, and still uttering his peculiar cries, he fiercely shook his cell door.

The three then ran up the stairs into the cellar to hurry away.

But no sooner had they emerged, when they heard two men coming down from the floor above. Filled with dismay, they dashed down into the sub-cellar again, Pippo pulling the trap down after them.

"What shall we do now?" queried Roddy in despair.

"Fight!" was Pippo's grim response.

"No—no!" interposed Mrs. Random. "Look at that trap-door."

"Ah! an avenue of escape!" cried Roddy.

He rushed over to the sewer main and flung open the wooden door.

Flashing the light inside an instant, he turned to his friends, crying:

"Come on. Fortune favors us. Here is a boat. In case of an attack by the police, the thieves use it to make their escape this way, no doubt."

The boy hurried through the trap, the others following.

A rude boat floated on the vile-odored stream, and they all got in.

Roddy closed the trap, and loosening the painter of the rude punt, he seized an oar, which was lying in the bottom. The sluggish tide carried them away, their only light coming from the lantern. But within an hour the terrible stench overcame them one by one. And when the boat finally drifted out on the river, the three unfortunates lay prostrated in the bottom, completely senseless, and in a half-dying condition!

CHAPTER XIV.

THEATRICAL ADVANTAGES.

Picked up by the police of a river patrol boat before morning dawned Roddy, Pippo and Mrs. Random were taken to a station-house, where a physician attended to them.

When they recovered their senses, they gave the police an account of what had occurred to them, and another raid was made on the "Cobweb." But before the police arrived, Bradford Bull had gone away, in ignorance of the fact that Roddy and Pippo had rescued Mrs. Random. Young Fagin, the imprisoned watchman, and half a dozen thieves who were wanted by the police, were apprehended. Roddy and the old Italian accompanied Mrs. Random home, and they found the servant girl, who had been chloroformed by Fagin when Mrs. Random was abducted, in charge of the Ninety-sixth street house.

The lady told the call-boy that Bull and his accomplice had taken her to a riverside resort, where she had been kept secluded until the night when Bull passed near the burning theater with her in a cab, while bringing her to the dungeon in the "Cobweb."

By the time the afternoon came the three had entirely recovered from the prostrating effect of the sewer gas under the skilful treatment of a good physician.

In the conversation that ensued Roddy had not the least trouble in proving his identity to his stepmother.

They did not forget Bradford Bull's plot, and an examination of the packet of papers Roddy had stolen from his coat pocket, in the "Cobweb," showed them that they belonged to Morris Hardcastle.

They were receipts of Bradford H. Bull for keeping Roddy, and proved the boy's identity conclusively; several letters from Hardcastle to his son, explained how he wanted the boy to impersonate Roddy, and these letters exposed Hardcastle's rascality to the lady. Others were letters from Jerry Wildrake, saying he had fostered Hardcastle's son until the boy became so vicious he had to put him out of the house; and others of the papers were letters from Captain Hanks, agreeing to take Roddy out of the country for a certain amount of money, which Denny Fagin was to pay him.

"Captain Hanks," said Mrs. Random, "why isn't he on the Random Lass?"

"Yes," replied Roddy, "and it was in that ship Hardcastle and Fagin were carried away."

"You don't say," replied the lady in surprise. "Do you know, Roddy, that that whaling vessel jointly belongs to you and I? The business with which the ship is connected was your father's, and is yet carried on. We send out whaling vessels, and the Random Lass was one of them."

Roddy was surprised, of course, and said so.

Before nightfall they received startling news from a maritime exchange.

A report was brought to them that the Random Lass was lost in a gale, and all hands on board had perished. It was a terrible ending for Roddy's enemies, but he did not feel very sorry that Hardcastle, his perfidious guardian, had, in company with the ruthless Captain Hanks and the wicked Denny Fagin, met with such a fate.

The vessel was fully insured, so nothing was lost by the wreck.

In the evening Roddy and Pippo went to the theater.

The fire had not done much damage, and some carpenters were then at work repairing the place.

They walked over toward Ann street when they spied Bull and young Hardcastle ahead of them. They followed them and saw them enter a hallway and ascend a flight of stairs to a gambling resort, which was kept by a man whom Roddy knew. Roddy and Pippo followed.

Knocking at a door at the top, a panel was slid open, and a man's face appeared in the square aperture gazing out at them suspiciously.

"Hello, Dan—is Bull here?" asked Roddy, coolly.

"Ah—is that you, Roddy? Yes—he's here. Come in."

Nudging Pippo, when the man unlocked the door, Roddy passed through with the old Italian, telling the doorkeeper Ravelli was a friend.

They were in a long room in which was a complete gambling outfit, but Roddy knew that Bull was in one of the private boxes, and he walked over to a row of small compartments with ground glass doors and entered one of them. It contained a table upon which was a stack of cards, and was neatly furnished. Out in the main room were several men playing faro, roulette, and other gambling devices.

"He is in the next room," whispered the boy cautiously.

"An' hea speakit too," muttered Pippo.

"Well, Mr. Hardcastle, sir," came the voice of Bull the next instant, "you agree to play the role of Roderick Random, then?"

"Of course," replied another voice. "We fixed that long ago. I'm to get halves."

"To be sure you are, Mr. Hardcastle, my dear sir," returned

Bull's voice, "and now, my good young friend, while we imbibe this excellent liquor you look over Roger Random's will, and I will disclose my plot to you."

Roddy and Pippo gazed at each other in delighted surprise.

They did not expect to hear all that Bradford Bull designed, to get hold of Roger Random's fortune, but the last words of the actor to young Hardcastle told them that they could now expect to hear a complete disclosure of Bull's scheme.

They began operations by drinking from a bottle of liquor, with which Bull had supplied himself and his companion.

Then the actor said in tones of intense earnestness:

"Since Jerry Wildrake kicked you out of his house, Hardcastle, you have had to live by your wits, sir. Having gambled away every cent you had, I am now offering you a golden chance you won't get every day."

"I know I'm busted," replied the other. "My father tried the same dodge, but he failed. Mrs. Random was too smart for him."

"True," replied Bull, with a chuckle. "But she, my very dear sir, cannot trouble either of us now. I've got her locked up in the 'Cobweb' cellar."

"That dive was raided. Fagin and others were hauled in—"

"True again. I read of it in this morning's paper. But no mention was made of the woman. Indeed, with the watchful bulldog I have placed over her cell, down in the sub-cellar, she must have escaped detection by the police, and there she must be yet. When this thing blows over I'm going there to give her a social call. Besides that, the real heir, whom you, Mr. Hardcastle, sir, are to impersonate, is dead—irrevocably dead, sir."

"Dead? What do you mean?"

"He ran into a well, in the yard of the house, corner of Third avenue and Ninety-sixth street—fell down, and lies at the bottom, a corpse!"

"Then we will meet no opposition?" queried Hardcastle.

"None whatever. That is the point, Mr. Hardcastle, sir! Your father—"

"I wonder where he is?"

"Dead!" said Bull, solemnly.

"Dead! Impossible!" cried the other, in startled tones.

"But he is! I told you how Roddy sent him away to sea in the Random Lass. Well, this evening's paper reports the wreck of the whaler and the loss of life of every one of the unfortunates on board at the time."

"That's too bad!" commented Hardcastle. "My old man was a scorcher. He croaked with a good deal to answer for. But go on, Bull, go on."

"My plan is simply this: I've got Roger Random's will. Hattie, his widow, and Roddy, his son, are out of the way. I will sue for you to recover Roddy's share, claiming you are the heir, and will have myself appointed your guardian, as you are, like Roddy, not even eighteen years old yet."

"Well?" queried Hardcastle, as Bull paused.

"As soon as we win our suit I will divide the fortune with you, and when we are ready to fly from New York I'll release Hattie Gray."

"How long will the case last, Bull?" asked Hardcastle.

"No more than two weeks, my dear sir. Two weeks at the utmost. The case is very simple. It would have been much more simplified but for one circumstance. I met with a misfortune. On the night before the 'Cobweb' was raided I encountered some congenial spirits, and we had a ball—in other words, we indulged too freely in—ah—spirits—"

"You mean to say you got drunk," interposed Hardcastle, coarsely.

"I will not deny the imputation, but you might modify your language to a less harsh degree, sir. At any rate, during that period of oblivion, I was unfortunate enough to lose a key, break a fine whisky flask, and lose a very valuable package of letters and receipts. An unknown tramp stole them."

"The things I took from him in the Five Points dive," whispered Roddy.

"That was too bad!" said Hardcastle, consolingly.

"Yes, very unfortunate, my dear sir—very unfortunate, as the sequel will show you. They key belonged to the lock of Mrs. Random's prison."

"What were the papers?" interrogated Hardcastle.

"They belonged to your father," replied Bull, dolefully. "I took them from Mrs. Random's house the night I, with young Fagin, abducted her. They consisted of receipts of mine for keeping Roddy, letters from Captain Hanks, agreeing to carry the boy away, and letters from Wildrake saying he kicked you out of his house for being too vicious—and, but by heavens, isn't it dreadful! If they are found, I'll go to— Oh, give me a—"

But his last word was drowned in the splashing of liquor in his glass.

This ended the conversation that was interesting to Roddy, as the actor and his companion commenced a game of cards. So Roddy and Pippo slipped out after cautioning the door-keeper not to mention about their being there.

They boarded a Third avenue car and rode up to Mrs. Random's.

The lady had not retired to rest, and Roddy briefly related to her what had transpired down in the Ann street gambling den.

So several weeks rolled by. Mrs. Random and her servant went to a hotel to board with Roddy and Pippo, who had given up his apartments in Cherry street. The Ninety-sixth street house was undergoing some repairs. After the Olympic was restored to its former appearance, Wildrake called in his new troupe. The plays were rehearsed over and over again, advertised extensively, and three weeks after the night of the fire the curtain rolled up on a celebrated play, with Roddy the Call Boy in the title role, and a crowded house to welcome him with a thunder of applause.

As Roddy came out on the stage, a man in the audience suddenly arose to his feet uttering a gurgling cry, and glared at the boy as if he was a veritable apparition.

His face was as pale as death, his body was quaking, and in every action he betrayed signs of the most poignant agitation.

The man was Bradford H. Bull.

Beside him sat Dave Hardcastle.

Roddy saw him, and a grim smile of satisfaction crossed the boy's face.

"The rascal has come back," thought the young actor, "and is surprised to see me here alive after he imagined I was a corpse."

As soon as the villains recognized Roddy they hastily left the theater.

"What blind fools we have been!" groaned Bull. "While we have been keeping shady in Boston imagining he was out of the way and our lawyer has been prosecuting his suit for us, the boy has been roaming at large, and probably creating all sorts of mischief. Come down this street. In one week more we would meet with success. That week must be gained. We must have no molestation from the boy. If it is necessary, I will—I will kill him."

As they turned into Crosby street they did not observe a shadowy figure following them, some distance in the rear, watching their movements.

It was Pippo Ravelli.

The old Italian had been in a private box in the theater with Mrs. Random.

He saw the actor when he arose upon beholding Roddy.

Slipping out of the box, Pippo followed them.

When Bull and his companion reached the stage entrance they saw several huge joists leaning against the building near the door.

"Just the thing," he muttered, as his glance fell upon them.

"What's that?" asked Hardcastle.

"I've got a plan."

Clutching his companion by the arm, he walked toward the planks.

Pippo slunk back out of sight behind a top wagon standing in the gutter.

Shortly young Hardcastle passed by Pippo and went around into Houston street.

Bull remained hidden behind the planks, as quiet as death.

Pippo then turned his glance upon the stage door.

A few minutes afterward it opened, and several actors came out in a group, talking about the hit Roddy had made in his role.

They walked away, then a couple of actresses appeared, passed on, and they had scarcely turned the corner when a cab came past them and turned into Crosby street, with Hardcastle in it.

The young reprobate saw Pippo behind the wagon.

Recognizing the old Italian, whom Bull had pointed out to him in the theater, he saw Ravelli was watching them.

He stopped the cab, got out, and taking a firm clutch on a loaded cane he carried, he stole up behind the old man unseen.

Just then Roddy came out of the stage door alone.

He was upon the point of walking away, when one of the planks slid toward him, then fell over like a shot blown from a cannon.

Down went the plank toward Roddy's head.

At the same juncture Bradford Bull appeared.

With one push he had the plank over upon his victim.

Pippo saw it falling, and uttered a warning cry to his pupil.

Roddy heard it and sprang aside. Too late!

The descending plank struck him, and then hit the sidewalk.

Roddy uttered a groan, and was knocked flat on the ground.

The old Italian bounded from his cover, wildly alarmed, as he imagined the boy had been killed by the blow.

Before he had gone two steps, though, Hardcastle reached him and dealt him a blow with the loaded cane that sent the old fellow over upon the ground like a log.

Seeing that he had rendered Pippo helpless, the young rascal seized him by the arms and dragged him over to the wagon.

Lifting his limp form up in his arms, Hardcastle flung him into the wagon, and then ran over beside Bull, who was stooping over Roddy.

"I've fixed him," chuckled the actor.

"Look out! Some one is coming from the stage."

Bull stooped over Roddy just as the doorkeeper came out.

"Vot's der medder?" asked the old German, approaching.

"One o' those planks fell down on this boy," said Hardcastle.

"Bring him insite. Dot is Roddy!"

"Oh, he will get over it. Get a glass of water."

The Dutchman was frightened, and ran inside again.

At the same moment Pippo's face appeared, staring out of the wagon at them.

"Now, Bull! Up with the boy, and into the carriage with him. Quick—before the Dutchman returns!" breathed Hardcastle hurriedly.

"Good! I've got him. And now—to the river!" panted Bull.

They rushed across the street with the senseless form of Roddy, and got into the waiting cab. The driver had been well paid, and shut his eyes to all that transpired. Then they were driven away.

Hardly had the cab vanished, when the doorkeeper appeared with a glass of water; but seeing nothing of them, he uttered an ejaculation of disgust, tossed away the water, and went inside again.

Pippo got out of the wagon and ran after the cab.

It went down Grand street at a rapid pace.

The river front was soon reached, and it turned to the left, and traversed along until the dock at which the Random Lass had been moored was reached; then it paused, and the two rascals got out with their still senseless burden. Hurrying out to the end of the dark pier, they raised the insensible boy and flung him down into the treacherous river. And returning to the cab, they got in and were whirled away, satisfied that Roddy would not now interfere with their plans.

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION.

A week passed by before Bradford Bull reached the climax of his plans.

About eight o'clock on a Saturday night the actor and his accomplice went up to the Ninety-sixth street house, and forcing open the back door they went in and made a hasty examination of the premises.

Not a soul was to be seen, and everything was in perfect order.

They had left New York immediately after throwing Roddy into the river.

Their lawyer was to meet them that night; so Bull and Hardcastle assumed an air of proprietorship of the house, to deceive the man, as they were careful to conceal from him the true inwardness of the case.

Having established themselves comfortably, and partaken liberally of the contents of the bottle, Bull broke the stillness by saying:

"He wrote that he would meet me at eight o'clock."

"Then as it is later now, it is time he appeared."

The actor nodded.

"And here he comes now!" said he, as a ring came at the bell.

Hardcastle got up and admitted a fine-looking gray-haired man.

He walked into the parlor, and nodded curtly to the actor.

"Ah!" said Bull, rising and beaming upon the other benignly. "Glad to see you."

"I fear you will not be," replied the gentleman, "when I tell you the news."

"Eh," said Bull with a startled look. "What's the matter?"

"You cannot get the fortune, sir!"

"But, sir, I want an explanation!" vociferated Bull, banging the table with his fist.

"You shall have it. Keep calm. A prior claim has been

made by a man named Pippo Ravelli, in behalf of a boy known as Roddy, the callboy—"

"Thunder!" exclaimed Bull, springing up again, as if electrified.

"This claim has been admitted lately," proceeded the lawyer, "backed up by the proof of the boy's stepmother, Mrs. Random."

"Great heavens, she must have escaped from the 'Cobweb!'" groaned Bull.

He pondered a moment, then he exclaimed:

"But this is the heir—this boy—"

"Bosh!" impatiently interrupted the lawyer again. "He is an impostor."

"Prove it!" cried the actor, furiously.

"I will," was the quiet reply of the lawyer.

He turned toward the door and called:

"Roddy!"

The actor and his companion started as if they were shot.

The next moment they recoiled with cries of consternation, as Roddy himself came into the room, followed by Pippo.

"Bradford Bull!" exclaimed Roddy. "You are unmasked!"

"Alive!" gasped the actor. "He yet lives!"

"Yes," cried Roddy, "I owe my rescue from the river to Pippo. He followed you and sprang into the current, saving my life at the peril of his own."

"Then I didn't knock him senseless!" muttered Hardcastle.

"This boy is already proven to be the real heir!" exclaimed the lawyer. "I took up your fraudulent case in good faith. Discovering what you two wretches are, I wash my hands of it now."

"Foiled! baffled! thwarted!" hissed Bull, furiously.

"Badly!" mockingly said Roddy. "Very badly, Bradford Bull. Your many rascalities have found you out at last, and you can do me no further harm. I have suffered much at your hands. The tables are now turned. I have gained fame and riches—you, a prison."

"A prison?" muttered the pallid actor, with a start.

"Nothing else! The papers you stole from this house were in my possession, and I gave them to the authorities. Upon their evidence you will soon go behind prison bars."

The actor recoiled as if he was stung.

"Then you it was who robbed me of them in the Cobweb?" he cried.

"Yes—I admit my guilt. Moreover, I rescued Mrs. Random, the same night, and apprising the police, that sink of vice was raided—its vile inmates captured—the place was broken up, and the son of Denny Fagin is now serving a term in prison."

At this moment Hardcastle slyly opened the hall door to steal out. But no sooner had he done so, when a hand came down on his arm. Uttering a cry, he wrenched himself free, and dashing across the room he went head first through the front window, landed in the yard below, cut and bruised, and ran away.

Bull looked up, and saw a policeman standing in the doorway.

Filled with fright, he bounded toward the broken window, to follow his confederate, but before he could reach it, the policeman seized him by the collar and jerked him over on the floor.

And before the frightened and cowering rascal could get up, a pair of handcuffs were snapped upon his wrists.

The policeman dragged him from the room, screaming to be released.

The lawyer departed, and Mrs. Random came in.

The boy told her what transpired, and she seemed to be relieved to think that young Hardcastle had not gone to prison.

They never saw the youth again in New York, as he fled to the West that night.

Bradford Bull was convicted and sentenced to a long term in prison, but he did not long survive his sentence. They found him dead in his cell one morning, and the coroner said it was liquor that killed him.

The stolen will was recovered from him and given to Mrs. Random.

Jerry Wildrake kept his word with Roddy, and the boy remained with him four years, traveling all over the country as a star, and making wonderful successes of all he undertook, under the tuition of old Pippo.

When he was twenty-one he came into his fortune, and Mrs. Random dying, left a good deal more. But he did not abandon the stage, for he was born to be an actor.

Next week's issue will contain "LOST AT THE SOUTH POLE; OR, THE KINGDOM OF ICE." By Cap't. Thos. H. Wilson.

CURRENT NEWS

Thirsty strangers in Aberdeen, S. D., have hit upon a new and most provoking way in which to quench their thirst. Frequently of late housewives have been called to the door and asked to loan a stepladder to a stranger, who stated that he was putting on screens for the next door neighbor. The request was granted, and then the stranger and the ladder disappeared. Later the ladder would be found in a pawnshop or second-hand store.

Probably the most remarkable lake in the world is one with a coating of salt that completely conceals the water. It may be seen at any time during the year, fully exposed, being seen at its best when the sun is shining upon it. This wonderful body of water is one of the saltiest of the salt lakes, and is situated near Obdorsk, in Siberia. The lake is nine miles wide and seventeen miles long, the salt coating increasing six inches every year. The many islands with which the lake is studded are said to act as braces and to keep the arched salt crust in position.

Edith Heymann, the fourteen-year-old daughter of Charles Heymann, of Stamford, Conn., a New York importer, displayed rare pluck the other morning, when she awoke and found a burglar standing by her bed and peering into her eyes. The burglar muttered that he would kill her if she made any outcry. She promised to be still, but when the man displayed a knife the girl slipped out of the bed on the side farthest from him, and ran out of the room. She aroused the household, but the burglar escaped.

Another phenomenal gush of oil is reported from Kurokawa, Akita, Japan, where the former and famous gush took place. At well No. 16, on which work has been in progress for some time with a rotary borer, a great jet of gas suddenly rose and was soon followed by a spectacular gush of oil. The gush on that day amounted to more than 3,000 barrels and that figure is being daily increased. Later another well sent up a jet which, according to a telegram received by the head office of the Nippon Petroleum Company, is too powerful to be allowed to flow at the present rate, so the power of the jet is curtailed.

The twenty-third general meeting of the Japan Red Cross Society was held recently in Hibiya Park, Tokio. The occasion was favored by fine weather, and was attended by over sixty thousand men and women, most of whom came up to the town from the remote parts of the country. According to the business reports delivered by President Hanabusa, the society has now over 1,700,000 members, including 13,000 members who were affiliated in the preceding year, and its funds are estimated at \$1,250,000. The work of prevention and cure of tuberculous diseases, which was started last year, is so satisfactory that the patients treated or cured numbered 80,000 last year.

The number of sufferers from calamities such as earthquakes or floods who were relieved by the society amounted to 75,000 during the preceding year. Its relief corps has, at present, about 4,400 works, including officers and nurses. In the present war, the society has rendered excellent services. The relief corps dispatched to England, France and Russia, stated the president, are discharging their duty to the satisfaction of those countries. After the reports, twenty-eight persons on the standing committee and three directors were elected.

A passenger car out of service is a liability, not an asset. It earns money only when it is working. Every day a car spends in the shops means a loss. To cut down the time required for drying a car after painting the test department of the Pennsylvania railroad began some experiments several years ago. The prospect of success was not bright, for quick-drying paints are much less durable than those requiring two days or more to dry.

But a way was discovered of cutting down the time of drying by 95 per cent., and thus the time the car is out of service is reduced by 50 per cent. A mammoth oven was built, into which the largest cars could be run. A newly-painted car is put in it, the doors are closed and the temperature is raised to above the boiling point of water. In three hours the car is quite dry and is sent back into active service.

The first tests of this oven-drying were made about two years ago, and the present condition of the paint so dried indicates strongly that oven-dried paint is more durable than that dried in the open air.

The United States Public Health Service estimates that 10,000 victims of tuberculosis of the lungs annually go West to die. It is estimated that in Albuquerque, N. Mex., there are 2,000 victims of consumption which have come from other States; more than 3,000 at El Paso, and 3,500 at San Antonio. The percentage of deaths from tuberculosis occurring within a short period of arrival at Western resorts is decreasing. This indicates that the warning to keep far advanced cases at home has been heeded. Nevertheless, as high as 15 per cent. of all deaths occurred within thirty days after arrival at the Western destination. Of particular interest to physicians, as well as the public, especially in view of the newer theories regarding the communicability of tuberculosis, are the facts marshaled to show the degree of danger to residents of the resort cities from the influx of consumptives. Tables are presented which go to prove that the degree of communicability of the disease, at least to adults, has probably been overestimated, and that the danger to healthy persons is no greater in the resort cities than elsewhere. The Public Health bulletin refers to the ravages of tuberculosis among the Mexicans of the Southwest. The peons have little resistance, and once the infection develops recovery is rare.

Jumping Jack, the Boy Acrobat

—OR—

LEAPING INTO LUCK

By William Wade

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER XV (continued)

"Well, I could swear that there is somebody back there on the trail, and there is, by thunder."

The old miner sprang up. Jack now, by hard listening, could hear faint sounds like the tramp of feet. A little later distant voices could be heard.

"Who is it?"

Zeb shrugged his shoulders.

"Prospectors, like us," he said. "I don't know what to do. Shall we stay here and put 'em off, or shall we slip up the creek on a prospectin' tour an' let 'em go by?"

But before the latter could be decided a loud hulloo came from the depths of the forest.

Two men quickly appeared. They carried the kit of miners.

That they were prospectors there was no doubt. Old Zeb's face clouded, but he said:

"I don't like the looks of them, pard."

The two prospectors came into the camp eagerly. They were of the usual type of gold hunter, but one of them had cold, shifting eyes and a sneering mouth. Neither Jack nor Zeb liked his looks.

"Hello, pilgrims!" cried this fellow. "Out for the stuff, are ye? Waal, so are we. Do ye know how far it is to White Park?"

"About twenty miles?" replied Zeb. "Are ye from Bill Jones's?"

"Yas, an' air yew the same?"

"Yas."

"Waal, we're short of rations. Kin yew help us out? My handle is Sim Mason, an' this is my pard Bob Crowell."

"An' my name is Zeb Pray, and this is my pard Jack Wallace."

The two prospectors looked curiously at Jack, but made no comment.

Zeb gave them some food. They sat down comfortably by the fire, and did not seem disposed to at once continue their journey.

It was likely that Mason noticed that Zeb had his pan and rocker rigged, for he looked curiously about, and asked:

"Strike any pay dirt hereabouts?"

"Not to speak of," replied Zeb curtly. "D'ye expect to git to the Park to-night?"

"Yas."

"Waal, ye ain't got no time to lose."

"Ain't ye comin' along, too?" asked Mason keenly.

"No, not to onct," answered Zeb. "I've got a twinge of rheumatiz in my knee, an' I'm restin'. We won't keep you, though."

Jack saw Mason give his partner a comprehensive look. Both arose and picked up their kit.

"Arter thet broad hint, we have no other course but ter

go," said Mason, with a grin, "but mebbe we'll see ye ag'in."

"Likely," was Zeb's curt rejoinder.

Mason and Crowell went on up the trail. When they had disappeared in the bushes Zeb drew out his revolver and examined it. He glanced at Jack.

"Did ye ever see a keener pair of pups?" he asked. "They know we've struck something."

"Do you think so?"

"I'm sure of it. Keep your gun always within reach, lad. There's no tellin' but we may see 'em ag'in, as that Mason hinted. Now let's go an' git the gold out of that pocket. I hope there's a fortune in it."

Jack eagerly sprang up.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DEADLY KNIFE.

There was no doubt that Zeb had sized up the two prospectors Mason and Crowell correctly. Jack was sure of this.

They no doubt had guessed the truth that Zeb and Jack had struck pay dirt. They were of the lawless type and they would not hesitate to acquire wealth by lawless means.

So Zeb was right when he placed Jack on his guard.

Quickly they moved their kit over to the banks of the little woodland stream. Zeb washed out some of the sand.

"Not very paying," he said, "but we will find the pocket if we follow the stream up."

This they proceeded to do.

Zeb carefully waded the stream, and at intervals he washed out some of the sand.

After awhile he came to a puzzled stop. Jack was interested.

"What is the trouble?" he asked.

"It is mighty queer," declared Zeb, "but there is not a trace of the gold here. We must have come by the pocket."

"Perhaps there is none."

"Oh, yes there is," said Zeb, positively. "The gold in these sands here was washed down from some higher point."

The miner went back slowly down the stream. Suddenly he turned and began to follow a small tributary. Almost instantly, he cried:

"Now we shall find it."

The sands of the small tributary showed signs of gold. Up this Zeb led the way for fully one hundred yards. This led them to a small spring in the side of the mountain.

Zeb took a pick from his kit. He drove it deep into the mossy covering of the spring hole.

As he removed this, the water was quite clouded. But he allowed it to settle, and then with a sharp cry, he beckoned to Jack.

"Did ye ever see a gold pocket, lad?"

"No!"

Jack bent down over the spring hole. What he saw gave him a start. The bottom was lined with particles of gold.

It was a thrilling sight.

"Gold!" he gasped. "Why it is a fortune, Zeb!"

"Well, hardly," said the practical miner. "But it will yield a couple of thousand all right. It is worth picking up, lad."

(To be continued)

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

PRISON TERM PROFITABLE.

Edward J. Miller, who gave his address as "nowhere in particular," was discharged from the county jail at Greensburg, Pa., after 220 days, a richer man in cash than he ever was before. He was held as a material witness in the murder trial of Harry E. Filler.

A material witness is allowed \$1.50 for every day that he is held. Miller received \$330 when he was discharged.

PIGEON POST TO PITTSBURGH.

A. F. Meyer of Chicago turned loose three homing pigeons recently from the back porch of his residence. He expects they will fly straight home to their owner, Joseph Larkin of Pittsburgh, Pa. "This is the first time the pigeons have been so far from Pittsburgh," he said. "I brought them with me on my return from a visit to Larkin recently. If the experiment is successful Larkin intends to fly the birds from Denver to Pittsburgh."

BOY CORN GROWER.

If corn is king, William James, an Allen County boy, living near Colony, is king of the Kansas corn champions. When a boy-farmer raises 116 bushels and 47 pounds of corn to the acre he is entitled to carry off the honors that many other older farmers would be glad to receive.

Besides having the honor of being champion corn grower of the State, young James made \$123 from his acre of corn. It is sometimes profitable to be a champion farmer. After all his expenses were paid his net profit was \$102. An itemized account of his corn makes interesting reading. Here it is: 104 bushels and 47 pounds sold at 70 cents a bushel, \$73.22; 12 bushels of seed corn sold at \$2.50 a bushel, \$30; premiums in contests, \$20; rent and other expenses, \$21.15.

THE WAR MAKES THINGS BOOM.

Probably no other counties in Northwestern Pennsylvania have been benefited to such an extent as have McKean, Warren and Elk by the European war. Of these three, McKean County has received the greatest boom, owing to its large number of glass and bottle manufacturing concerns.

While the glass business is far from normal, the larger part of the business at present is in the export trade, as practically all glass manufacturers have closed their plants in European countries.

The Curtis Leather Company, at Ludlow, is still working on its large order for saddles, received from the French Government, and at present is operating day and night turning out about 1,800 sides of leather a day. It is understood that it will require many more weeks of steady operations by the Ludlow industry to fill its large order.

The latest industry in McKean County to benefit by the

war is the Pennsylvania Oil Products Refining Company of Eldred, which has received an order for 200,000 pounds of wax from the Italian Government. The wax is used in the manufacture of war supplies.

The war caused a great demand also for acetone, which is used in the manufacture of smokeless powder, and which resulted in the erection of an acetone plant by Quinn & Troy at East Smethport, which plant is now operating day and night.

In Warren County the Warren Chemical Products Company, at Warren, is operating to its full capacity as the result of an immense war order for gun cotton.

Another industry in Warren County to benefit by the war was the Warren Ax and Tool Company, which received a large war order for saddle fittings, stirrups, etc.

In Elk County the war has been instrumental to a large extent in the erection of an acetone plant at St. Marys by the Melville Corbett Company, which, like the acetone plant at East Smethport, is operating day and night. The demand for acetone has been so great that the St. Marys Company is at present building an addition to its plant, which will greatly increase the output.

NO USE FOR OSTRICHES.

According to Consul E. A. Wakefield, who is at Port Elizabeth, South Africa, it is difficult to believe that a few months could possibly see such great changes in values as have occurred in connection with ostriches and ostrich feathers. It has been a tremendous blow to that Consular district for the time being, he says, but if it leads to a greater cultivation of the land, it may be the best thing that could have happened for the future of South Africa. Interest in the ostrich as a revenue producer is now at the lowest possible ebb, and birds are dying by thousands from lack of food and attention.

To show how the value of these birds has fallen, Mr. Wakefield quotes from local newspapers as follows:

"Ostriches are now of such little account and value that the Poundmaster has written to the Council asking permission to refuse ostriches in the pound.

"It is said that a full-grown cock ostrich which had found its way to the Grahamstown pound was, on being put up to public auction on the market, sold for the magnificent sum of 3 pence, or 6 cents.

"A prominent Oudtshoorn farmer, and one of our most far-seeing men, is of the opinion that on account of the large export of lucerne from this district during the coming winter thousands of ostriches will perish from starvation.

"When traveling along the Sunday's River from Jansenville up through Blaaukrantz and Uitkomst one cannot help noticing the large number of dead ostriches lying about, while birds which appear to be of a very good class roam about the roads and veld, uncared for and unplucked."

FROM ALL POINTS

Mrs. A. McKay, 102 years old, hearing that her daughter, Mrs. J. W. Parfitt, of Redding, Cal., and four small children were on the way from Hayfork to Hyampom by pack train, saddled a horse and rode out five miles on the trail to greet them. She celebrated her hundredth birthday by saddling a horse and riding over to Big Bear, eighteen miles away, going one day and returning the next.

To fall from a spring wagon from which he was spraying a tree and be butted fifteen feet over rough ground by his pet bull, was the experience of John P. Nelson, of Hawkins, Ind. The bull seemed to take the tumble from the wagon as a joke and charged Nelson, apparently in good humor. Nelson was painfully but not seriously bruised. He is of the opinion that if the bull had been really angry he would not have escaped serious injury.

Four diamonds were the cause of the intestinal indigestion from which Thomas Fallon, of Grove and York streets, Jersey City, a money lender, was relieved recently by an operation at Christ Hospital. Fallon says he unintentionally swallowed the diamonds years ago. Six X-ray photographs recently taken of Fallon's abdomen revealed the obstruction. Remnants of two pawntickets were also removed.

The original map made by George Washington in 1775 of the lands on the Great Kanawha River, West Virginia, granted to him by the British Government in 1763 for his services in the Braddock expedition, is now in the possession of the Library of Congress. The map is about two by five feet, and is entirely in the handwriting of Washington. The margin is filled with notes, also in Washington's handwriting, describing the boundary marks set by Washington and different features of the tract.

Mrs. Maud Estes of Kamiah and A. J. Stuart of Stites united in marriage the other day on the Lewiston-Clarkston bridge, just on the Idaho side of the midchannel of the Snake River. The parties had come to Lewiston expecting to be married by their pastor, the Rev. J. B. York, of the Baptist Church of Stites, who was in attendance at an association meeting at Clarkston. On learning of their mission they were invited to be married in the association meeting, but this was impossible because the license was obtained in Idaho, and so the meeting adjourned to the center of the bridge.

A wireless message about a black cat came all the way from Papeete recently to the marine department of the Chamber of Commerce of San Francisco. With only this cat aboard, the British ship Dalgonar has drifted for two years a derelict of the seas. The wireless message states that the ship's bell and the black cat had been rescued by men from a small trading schooner and safely landed at

Papeete. The Dalgonar, helpless in a storm, was abandoned in midocean in June, 1913. Early in 1914 the French ship Lorrie reported finding the shipwrecked mariners drifting in a small boat. Three had died from exposure, and the fourteen others were in a pitiable condition.

Nearly \$150,000 in bequests, of which about \$90,000 are of a public character, are contained in the will of Miss Laurastine Cotheal Smith, who died June 1 at her home, No. 23 Fulton street, Newark, N. J., at the age of seventy-seven years. Miss Smith had long been known for her activity in charities and in matters relating to the uplift of her sex. Among the personal bequests are three of \$6,000 each to the three servants, Mrs. Isabella Cuypers, Miss Sarah L. Sipp and Miss Marie Krafft. They are also to receive all of the wearing apparel, jewelry, household effects and all other personal property owned by their late mistress, and are to enjoy a life residence in her Fulton street home. The home thereafter is to go to Trinity Episcopal Church, Newark.

The king alligator of Georgia has been killed at Hutchinson's pond at Adel by M. L. Crowley, after the beast had eluded hunters for twenty-two years. The alligator measured 10 feet 4 inches and had thirty-seven notches on its tail, which shows that it was thirty-seven years old. Many have been the attempts to kill the sly old creature, but always until now it has escaped the bullets aimed at it and has scuttled safely back to its cave. It was the 'gator's appetite for hogs that proved its undoing. Mr. Crowley, who for twenty-two years has been hunting this beast, tied the leg of a porker to a tree near Hutchinson's pond, and hid himself. The wary old 'gator slid out of the water, through a clump of bushes, and was just reaching for the bait when Mr. Crowley fired. The bullet took the beast in a vital spot and killed it instantly.

The stewards of the Jockey Club have engaged detectives to watch trainers and riders who may fall under suspicion. In cases where the suspicion is borne out by facts that the best interests of the turf are not being served, the guilty persons will lose their licenses. This will be tantamount to ruling the offending persons off the turf. Up to the present, racing this season has been particularly clean. The chief fault has been that some jockeys have adopted waiting tactics that resulted in races being lost which should have been won. Whether these tactics were the result of error or have been premeditated is what the stewards are anxious to know. So far they have given the riders the benefit of the doubt, but in order to set their minds at ease they have engaged detectives to follow up the riders and find out with whom they associate. Those who mingle with touts and "sure-thing players" will be punished. The stewards of the National Steeplechase and Hunt Association are working in complete accord with the stewards of the Jockey Club.

HURRICANE HAL

— OR —

THE BOY WHO WAS BORN AT SEA

By J. P. Richards

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER XII (continued)

He tried to estimate the depth of the pit into which he had fallen, but could not, and then he let himself sink to see if he could reach bottom.

He did this in a moment, and decided that the water could not be much more than twelve feet in depth at the most.

"I wonder how far it goes?" he thought, and then he began swimming, finding the strange place extending as he swam on, and having room enough for his strokes.

The place grew larger, but the passage continued, and so he swam on, wondering where the subterranean passage would lead him, and whether it would not end in some channel entirely filled with water and too small for him to swim through.

He tasted the water, found it salty, and muttered:

"Either this place communicates with the sea or the water was thrown in here when the tidal wave swept over the island."

"Yes, but did it sweep all over the island, or only at certain places? This water does not taste stagnant, and it is some time since the tidal wave. No, this passage certainly leads to the sea, but whether I can make my way clear through it or not is the question."

He swam slowly and cautiously for some distance farther, and then found his feet touching bottom, and, reaching up, found that he could touch the top of the strange passage.

"H'm! the place may be full at high tide," he mused. "I wonder which way the tide is setting now? It would be awkward to be caught in here with it full of water."

He waded for a considerable distance, feeling the wall above his head from time to time, but not finding it any lower.

Then he perceived that the water was growing deeper, and finally it reached to his neck, then to his chin, then to his lips, and finally to his eyes.

He raised himself upon his toes, drew a deep breath, and shot forward under water, taking a long, rapid stroke which sent him ahead like a fish.

Exerting all his strength, he swam as rapidly as possible, not knowing how great a distance he would have to go before he would emerge from the water.

He remembered how wide the island was, but that did not tell him how great a distance he had already covered in the subterranean passage, nor how far he must swim before reaching the end.

Where this might be he could not tell, whether it were in the sea or at the bottom of some pit from which there was no escape.

All he knew was that he must exert all his energies or be drowned, and he swam as he never swum before.

At last, when it seemed as if his eyes were starting from his head, as if the blood were spouting from nose, mouth and ears, and as if he could not hold his breath the slightest fraction of an instant longer, he suddenly saw a light on his eyes, felt a breath of air on his cheek, and found himself floating on the surface not far from the bluffs.

He struck out for the beach, not stopping to see if he could locate the hole in the bluff whence he must have issued, but making his way to shore as speedily as possible.

The sun was setting, and it would soon be dark, and there were dangers to be avoided, as he well knew.

Turning his head once he saw a sharp fin cut the water, and realized what it meant.

Then he saw another and another, and then the bay seemed alive with them.

They were sharks, and had scented him.

Fortunately he was between them and the shore, and his course lay straight before him.

Nearer came the terrible creatures, but nearer was the shore as well.

The very danger seemed to give him strength.

He had lost his shoes somewhere, so that he was not impeded by them, and his clothing was light enough not to be a hindrance.

Nearer came the sharks, and now it seemed as if the foremost one must seize him, but as the savage creatures shot forward and turned, he grounded in the shallow water and floundered helplessly on his back, while his fellows darted upon him, and Hal ran from the water and fell half fainting upon the beach.

The sun was down, and it grew dark before the boy arose and drew himself beyond the reach of the rising tide, there being but a short twilight in that latitude.

He fell on the sands to rest and was asleep before he was aware, being utterly worn out with all his exertions and the reaction that followed his escape from so many perils.

When he awoke the sun was shining in his face, and he knew that he must have slept all night.

"They will wonder what has become of me," he mused. "Yes, and there is Mary. She must not be left in that scoundrel's power. I must give the alarm at once, and start to her aid."

He was hurrying on when suddenly he saw Anita coming toward him from a little grove.

He knew her at once by the torn skirt, the lace mantilla over her head, and her velvet jacket.

"Perhaps she can tell me something, perhaps she is even now coming to offer some plan of escape," he muttered.

Then he hurried forward to meet the girl when the latter, as she approached, threw back her mantilla, and, uttering a glad cry, threw herself into the boy's arms.

It was not Anita at all.

It was Mary Clinton, safely escaped out of the hands of the pirates.

"Why, Mary, how is this? What has happened? How do you come to be in this disguise?" cried Hal, holding the lovely girl in his arms and gazing fondly into her eyes. "I thought you were Anita."

(To be continued)

INTERESTING TOPICS

H. L. Richie, a rancher living near Okaton, S. Dak., is the owner of a rooster which evidently aspires to become known as the man killing rooster. As a result of a spurring from the rooster, Richie was in a critical condition recently from blood poisoning, and yet feels the effects of the wound inflicted by the bird. Richie was opening the door of his hen house when the rooster jumped upon his knee and spurred him twice.

A report issued by Admiral Thaon di Revel, chief of the Italian naval staff, shows that Austrian wireless messages are intercepted regularly by the Italians, says a special dispatch from Rome. The Italians have been enabled to obtain this information, which is of immense military value, by the use of a new device invented by Guglielmo Marconi. The device is said to make it impossible for the Austrians to intercept Italian messages.

There is somewhere among the wilds of Donegal, Ireland, a March hare carrying about with him the sum of \$25, tied in a white handkerchief. A farmer's daughter, going home after shopping with the money tied in her handkerchief, came upon a hare in a trap, and not wishing to lose such a prize took out her handkerchief and tied it around the hare's neck. When she released the hare from the trap the lively animal escaped with the handkerchief.

Nine camps have been opened in Canada for the training of men for oversea service. Each is placed in an area of from three hundred acres to ten miles square, and the nine are spaced across the 3,000 miles of the Dominion's breadth at almost regular intervals. During the summer 100,000 men will train in these camps. The training is to be of the most practical nature and the work made to conform as nearly as possible to actual fighting conditions in Europe. To this end Canadian officers and non-commissioned officers who have been invalided home will be sent to the several camps to assist.

Gen. Alexander Bertram, chairman of the Shell Committee appointed by the Dominion Government to superintend the manufacture of munitions of war, addressing the delegates to the Canadian Manufacturers' Association recently, said that orders had been placed in Canada by the British Government for 9,000,000 shrapnel shells. Although at the outbreak of the war there was only one shell-making plant in Canada, with a capacity of seventy-five shells per day, there are now 130 establishments engaged in the manufacture of shrapnel, and within a short time the output would be between 40,000 and 50,000 shells a day, Gen. Bertram said.

Convicts in French Guiana seem to be in luck. They are reported to be working a gold mine on their own account. Their warders have apparently so far failed to discover where they have successfully pegged their claim. The convicts in turn escape from the settlement by twos

or threes and remain hidden for a day or two. They then return with their pockets full of nuggets and have a great time. Others get away in their turn, but come back eventually, also with gold. The mine is thus kept regularly working by shifts of convicts. The latter when they return to the settlement are regularly sentenced to a few days' imprisonment for absence without leave, but this is a low price to pay for a share in a gold mine. Where the latter is the authorities have never yet been able to discover.

Two masked robbers, with revolvers drawn, boarded a Southern Pacific train en route from San Francisco to Los Angeles at Chatsworth, Cal., at midnight the other day, robbed passengers of \$565 and escaped. Men and women in the last four coaches of the train were compelled to give up their money and jewelry. After collecting their booty the bandits pulled the signal cord, stopping the train at Hewitt and fled. Officials said they believed an accomplice was waiting near the station with an automobile. Several shots were fired at the robbers as they swung from the train, and they returned the fire, but no one was hit.

"There are two ways to invite war," said President Arthur Twining Hadley, of Yale University, on June 6. "One is to make too much preparation and the other to make too little. I believe we are going very far in the direction of the latter. Personally, I am heartily in favor of preparedness." Dr. F. S. Luther, president of Trinity College, of Hartford, Conn., said that he was thoroughly in favor of the most complete preparation. "I think we should have a powerful army and an equally powerful navy," he said. "Our young men should be taught at least to shoot straight, to take care of themselves in the field, to speak the truth and to fear no man."

On a property where the rabbit shooting was strictly preserved, upon the southern coast of England, a boy was caught with two dead rabbits in his possession, and nothing that would account for their decease. A search of his pocket revealed nothing but two live crabs of small dimensions, the end of a candle and a box of matches. Under promise of release the urchin was persuaded to disclose his method of procedure. First he selected a likely burrow, and then stripped off his clothes, putting his coat over one hole, his trousers over another, and his shirt over the third. He lit the candle end, dropped a little grease upon the crab's back, and stuck the lighted candle thereon, and then put the crab at an unoccupied opening. Straightaway the frightened torchbearer fled sideways into the darkness and explored the innermost depths; while the boy, expectant as a terrier, awaited events outside. Presently a rabbit bolted into the coat; as it did so that boy was after it like a shot, and boy, rabbit and coat all rolled over together, the boy rising from the fray with the rabbit in his clutches.

A FEW GOOD ITEMS

MAKING PANAMA HATS.

Toquilla straw, from which Panama hats are made, is obtained from five or six species of the palm. The most important of these is known as *Carludovica palmata*, and grows in the warm, moist regions of the Pacific Coast in Colombia and Ecuador, and also in the forests of Peru along the headwaters of the Amazon. This palm attains a height of 6 to 10 feet. The leaves are fan-shaped. Toquilla straw is exported to the United States and other countries, where the hats are made by machinery.

Panama hats are made in Colombia in the following manner, writes Ross Hazeltine, United States consul at Cartagena. When the palm is about 5 feet high the most tender leaves are cut and the veins taken out, submerged in boiling water several times, and placed in the sun to dry and whiten. Further to whiten the straw lime juice is added to the boiling water. Then the straw is moistened to make it flexible and split with the finger nail into strips of the required width. A bunch of the straw is tied in the middle and placed in the center of a wooden mold. The fibers are placed in equidistant pairs and weaving is begun in the upper part of the cup and continues in circular form until the hat is finished. The addition of fibers while weaving the crown is carefully avoided, and the number of fibers is increased to make the brim and edge. The beauty and durability of the hat depends largely upon the degree of exactness with which the fibers are interwoven. Once completed, the hat is washed in clean, cold water, a coat of gum is applied, and the hat is finally polished with dry sulphur.

To weave a fine hat requires three to six months with four to five hours' work daily. Two inferior hats of ordinary straw can be woven in one day. First quality hats of toquilla are sold in the foreign retail markets at prices varying from \$25 to \$100 each.

HOW SHE SAVED MONEY.

The girl who was born under the star of extravagance, whatever that is, was praised for her unnatural economy.

"Just think," her people said, "of having all that money over there in Paris and not spending it."

"Don't blame me," the girl protested with unblushing candor. "It was not my fault. I wanted to spend it, but I could not; I couldn't get at it. In spite of myself, I was forced into the paths of economy by the French Government."

"At the beginning of the war I solved all the business problems by making my trunk my banker. What money I had was drawn out of the bank and deposited in my trunk. That seemed a pretty safe place, so most of my money was left there when I went to London on a visit."

"I had made my home in Paris with an old school friend. While I was in London her husband died."

"When I came back it was as much as I could do to get into the house. The Government had been in and had clapped red seals, fastened to the ends of a piece of tape, across everything about the place."

"My own trunk had not escaped. Right across the lock was a band of tape with these seals of 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity,' above and below. They did not represent much liberty for me; they came nearer to representing captivity, for I had run up debts, and the only money I had to pay them with was in that trunk."

"Then came such a bargain sale. It consisted of lace and feathers and jewelry that had belonged to a very fine lady and were going dirt cheap. They were sold at private sale and I was offered first pick of anything I wanted."

"For three months, while all the terrifying entanglements of French law were being unraveled, my money was imprisoned. When my friend's affairs were finally settled and the seals removed, the bargains I coveted had been sold elsewhere, so I had saved my money."

LOANS TO STUDENTS.

With an addition of a gift recently of \$2,000 from the class of 1879 of the Columbia University School of Mines, there is now available at the university a fund of over \$8,000 to be used in making loans to students of that department to help them over any financial difficulties. Many deserving students have been assisted in this way to graduate from the school.

Dean Frederick A. Goetze of the Graduate Engineering School of Columbia University gave out figures showing the number of students who have been assisted by this fund. One of the largest donations to the fund was made by the class of '87.

Up to the beginning of this year a total amount of nearly \$10,000 had been loaned to about sixty-eight students. Of this amount the students have already paid back \$4,681.49. Dean Goetze stated the other day that the students invariably paid back their loans promptly at maturity, except in very few cases, where they are burdened with expense, and in these instances extensions are granted.

The average amount lent to a student is estimated at \$126. Some loans as high as \$275 are made and the smallest loan made was \$35. Of the students to whom the loans were made nineteen, or nearly 50 per cent., were scholarship men who enjoy wholly or partially free tuition. About 80 per cent. of the students were from the third or fourth year men whom the faculty knew. However, loans have been made to the freshmen in exceptional cases.

The demands on the fund since the war broke out have been unusually heavy and indicate the trying financial burdens felt by the students and their parents. Nevertheless, the loans have been paid back promptly and there have been comparatively few requests for extensions.

The students upon graduation usually find little difficulty in paying off the loans. The usual security which is asked is character. If the student desiring the loan has shown merit in his work and seems to be one to be trusted no further questions are asked by the faculty.

PLUCK AND LUCK

NEW YORK, JULY 7, 1915.

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GOOD CURRENT NEWS ARTICLES

By an ingenious device wild animals can now take their own pictures. A piece of cord is suspended between two trees, and when the animal comes into contact with the cord it fires a fuse cartridge and opens the shutter of a camera, which thus automatically "snaps" the animal.

Miss S. D. Wallace, of Marion County, Ind., got her annual fishing and hunting license at the office of Eugene C. Shireman, State Commissioner of Fisheries and Game. Miss Wallace is sixty-two years old, according to her license, and is five feet six inches in height. She is the oldest woman in the State to receive a similar license prior to a fishing trip in Northern Indiana.

A young buck deer, in order to escape pursuing dogs, committed suicide near Brewster, N. Y., by leaping in front of the Federal Express of the Central New England Railway. The deer was one of a pair which have been roaming over Stuyvesant Fish's country place. The train engineer sent word to the despatcher and John Ingalls, the section foreman, found the deer's body 100 feet away from where the engine hit it. Game Protector Barry has the venison.

At the mid-biennial council of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, Portland, Ore., Mrs. Thomas G. Winter, of Minneapolis, chairman of the literature department of the general federation, created a stir when she proposed that a move be started to have 2,000,000 members of the general federation deny themselves one pair of silk stockings a year and contribute that money to an endowment fund for work of the federation's department in aesthetic lines.

Henry Pfeiffer, of Philadelphia, son of a Cedar Falls pioneer, now head of the Pfeiffer Chemical Company, concluded a two-week's visit with his brothers and sisters of Cedar Falls, Iowa, by presenting each of them with a check for \$10,000 and an automobile. His benefactions in this way totaled nearly \$100,000. The beneficiaries are H. J. Pfeiffer, L. Pfeiffer, Mrs. D. C. Merner, Mrs. W. F. Noble, brothers and sisters, and ex-Mayor W. H. Merner, D. C. Merner and S. S. Merner, brothers-in-law.

One of the biggest mountain lions seen in Oklahoma for years, measuring over seven feet from tip to tip and weighing 175 pounds, was killed in a cave in the Gyp Hills by George Steubenville, of Okeene. He came upon the lion unexpectedly while exploring the cave with a party of friends, and was armed only with a 22-caliber revolver. It had been known for some weeks that a marauder of some sort, presumably a mountain lion, was playing havoc with poultry and calves. It had been seen disappearing in the darkness several times, but no one had gone near enough to get a shot at it. Steubenville was the only one of the party who was armed at all when they came upon the beast, which was evidently prepared to put up a stiff fight. The cave was dimly lighted by a lantern carried by the exploring cult, but Steubenville was fortunate enough to hit the panther in the eye, killing it instantly.

GRINS AND CHUCKLES

Famished Student—Something is preying on my mind. Professor W.—It must be very hungry.

Lady (at the glove counter)—What is the latest thing in kids? Clerk (who has two of his own)—Colic, mum.

"I am looking for trouble," said the caller. "I am sorry," replied the other, "but I have made it a rule never to lend my auto."

"Even in de summer time," says Brother Williams, "it's a good idee ter have a steam heater in de meetin' house, kaze it puts de sinners in mind er what's ahead of 'um!"

Mr. Gooder—Here's a book I'd very much like to have our daughter read. It contains some good advice for a girl of her age. Mrs. Gooder—Very well. I'll forbid her to touch it.

"I think," declared the little daughter of the widow to the millionaire who was calling, "that you are a charming and delightful man." "How nice! What makes you say so?" "Mamma told me to."

"So you favor the suit of that foreigner?" "Yes," answered Mr. Cumrox. "I think I should rather like to have a man in the family whose English mother and the girls can criticize instead of mine."

"Jones and his wife are quarreling again." "Oh, yes!" "I thought they buried the hatchet." "Well, so they did, but the very next time Mrs. Jones had to chop the kindling she dug it up."

Lady—I wish to select a pet dog. Dealer—Do you live in town, mum? "Yes; I live in a flat." "Then I would advise an Italian greyhound, mum. No matter how much you feeds greyhounds, they allus stays narrer."

Indian Killer from New York—Where's yer Indians? Colorado Jack—All dead. Indian Killer—Who killed 'em? Colorado Jack—Why, you see, young feller, they heard you was coming and they laid down and died.

THE NEWS IN SHORT ARTICLES

STATISTICS OF THE CIVIL WAR.

Here are some statistics of our Civil War found in an article by Frances Trevelyan Miller, published in the New York Sun two years ago. The total enrolments of Federal and Confederate were 3,500,000 men. From this total could have been martialled nearly two armies of the strength of Russia and Japan combined in the Russo-Japanese war, more than two armies of the combined strength of France and Germany in the Franco-Prussian war, six armies of the combined strength of the British and the Boers in the Anglo-Boer War, more than seven armies of the combined strength of the Russians and the Allies in the Crimean war, and more than twenty armies of the combined strength of the troops actually engaged by Spain and the United States in the Spanish-American War, four armies equal to that Napoleon led against Moscow, three greater than the armies under command of von Moltke in the Franco Prussian war, thirty armies like that Hannibal led across the Alps against the Romans. Julius Caesar, in leading his armies against the forces of Pompey, in Spain, did not have the fighting strength that Stonewall Jackson brought down the Shenandoah Valley, and the legions of Pompey were less than those of McClellan. Cromwell led against the Scots an army of less numerical strength than those who were left dead and wounded by Hooker at Chancellorsville or by Rosecrans at Stone's River. There were two soldiers left killed or dying in the American Civil War to every man who fought in the American Revolution. More soldiers were left dead and wounded in the Seven Days' retreat than fought in the combined armies of the English and the Americans at Bunker Hill. More soldiers fell at Antietam than were in the entire British army which was surrendered by Burgoyne at Saratoga.

A NEW DEVICE.

An entirely new device, invented by a Dutch scientist, is likely to do away with the cumbersome receiver and transmitter we now have to use when telephoning. It is possible that the telephone connection of the future will be merely a tiny hole in the wall, not larger than the point of a pencil in size. The receiver and transmitter will be carried in one's pocket, for in the new invention they are no larger than a watch.

The thermaphone, as its inventor has named it, is much more sensitive than the usual telephone receiver, so that messages can be heard very much more clearly. A cross-continent phone message, with perfect relays, can be heard as easily with a thermaphone as though the speaker were in the next room. There is none of the "buzzing" sound that occasionally makes telephoning annoying.

Moreover, it is much more silent. No one can hear the message except the person receiving it.

The transmitter is so sensitive, also, that there is no need to speak loudly. The lower the voice the more clearly can it be heard. This would enable several telephones to be in use at the same time in a business office.

The principle of the thermaphone is simple. The mag-

net and diaphragm of the present telephone are replaced by a loop of exceedingly fine platinum wire within a small aluminum cover pierced with minute holes. Currents passing through the wire cause changes in temperature, alternating from heat to cold with great rapidity. The consequent expansions and contractions of the surrounding air become evident as sound.

There is little to get out of order, and the cost of manufacture is less than half a dollar.

The thermaphone is also good for the receiving of wireless messages, and with one of these in his pocket, or, rather, in his ear, a man might walk along the street and hear constantly some of the more powerful wireless messages from stations in their neighborhood.

This, of course, would apply only to those of a wavelength to which the thermaphone has been tuned.

SCHOOL CHILDREN DESTROY CATERPILLARS.

School children in New York State destroyed 830,000,000 tent caterpillars last year, according to figures just tabulated. They collected 4,150,150 egg masses or rings of this pest, which causes a loss of many thousands of dollars each year to one of the State's most important crops. The rural education department of the State College of Agriculture at Cornell is responsible for the correctness of the figures, on the basis that each egg mass averages 200 eggs. A school of thirteen pupils in Clinton county collected 55,525 egg clusters; one of thirty pupils in Sullivan county collected 20,000 clusters and another of only ten pupils in Tompkins county collected 13,000 egg rings.

The tent caterpillars have been abundant during the past two years and promise to do considerable damage in the coming season, and an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

The eggs of the apple tree tent caterpillars were laid last July by the parent moths in rings around the smaller twigs of apple, peach, wild cherry and even plum trees. They appear in the early spring as dark colored with an impervious coat of varnish-like substance, which has kept the eggs fully protected from the weather during the winter. Twigs which bear the egg masses should be clipped off or peeled off with the fingers. If the eggs are not destroyed the caterpillars will build their white webbed tents in the branch crotches and will defoliate the trees again this year. The work of the school children in the campaign against the tent caterpillars may be encouraged during the first three weeks of April by contests between different grades in the same school if both teachers and pupils will take an interest. In addition to the pleasure of winning by bringing in the greatest number of egg clusters there is the further incentive of a knowledge that the work not only saves money to the State but keeps the trees green and sightly. The college authorities suggest that an egg collecting contest of this sort would be particularly appropriate for Boy Scouts either between patrols or between individuals in a single patrol.

THE HELLO PUZZLE



Can you get the ring off? This puzzle is the latest creation of Yankee ingenuity. Apparently it is the easiest thing in the world to remove the ring from the block, but it takes hours of study to discover the trick, unless you know how it is done. Price by mail, postpaid, 10c.; 3 for 25c. **WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

SMALL COLLAPSIBLE PENCILS

The name is a joke. It looks small enough while it is hanging on your watch-chain, and it is very handsome in design, prettily nicked, and very compact. But just hand the end of it to your friend, and it begins to telescope until he imagines there is no end to it. Besides its ability to make fun, it is a good useful pencil, too. Price, 15c. each, by mail, postpaid. **WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

THE MAGIC NAIL

A common nail is given for examination, and then instantly shown pierced through the finger; and yet, when taken out, the finger is found to be perfectly uninjured, and the nail is again given to be examined. Nicely finished. Price, 10c. by mail, postpaid. **C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.**

LINK THE LINK PUZZLE

The sensation of the day. Pronounced by all, the most baffling and scientific novelty out. Thousands have worked at it for hours without mastering it, still it can be done in two seconds by giving the links the proper twist, but unless you know how, the harder you twist them the tighter they grow. Price, 6c.; 3 for 15c.; one dozen, 50c., by mail, postpaid. **WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

WIZARD'S PACK OF TRICK CARDS

A full pack of 53 cards, but by the aid of the instructions given, anyone can perform the most wonderful tricks. Many of the feats exhibited are truly marvelous, and astonish and amuse a whole audience. Positively no sleight-of-hand. The whole trick is in the cards. Price, 35c. by mail, postpaid. **WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

SLIDE THE PENCIL

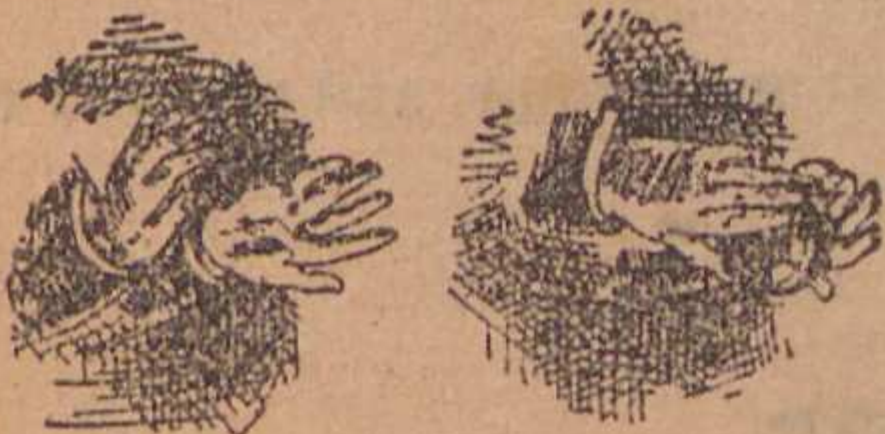
The pencil that keeps them guessing. Made of wood and lead just like an ordinary pencil, but when your victim starts to write with it—presto! the lead disappears. It is so constructed that the slightest pressure on the paper makes the lead slide into the wood. Very funny and a practical joke. Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid; 3 for 25c. **H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.**

FIFFI

Also known as a Japanese butterfly. A pleasing novelty enclosed in an envelope. When the envelope is opened Fiffi will fly out through the air for several yards. Made of colored paper to represent a butterfly. Price, 10c. by six inches wide. **WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

THE SURPRISE FOUNTAIN PEN

A novelty of the greatest merit! It looks just like a genuine fountain pen. But it isn't. That's where the joke comes in. If you take off the cover, a nice, ripe, juicy lemon appears. Then you give the friend you lend it to the merry "ha-ha." You might call it an everlasting joke because you can use it over and over again. Price, by mail, postpaid, 10c. **H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.**



APPEARING BILLIARD BALL.—A solid billiard ball, beautifully made, can be made to appear in the bare hands with the sleeves rolled back to elbows. Very fine and easy to do. Price, 35c. **WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

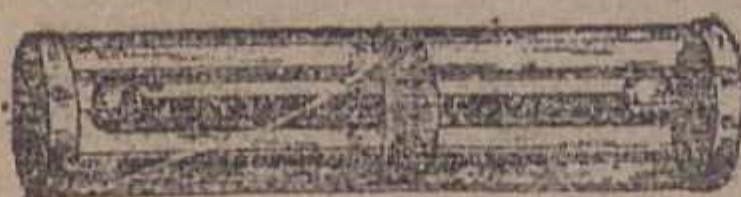
GLASS SCOPES



This popular novelty is made of blown glass, and is to be filled with water. It then becomes a powerful magnifier suitable for enlarging any small object to an extraordinary size. Can be carried in the vest pocket. Price, 5c. each by mail postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

SEE-SAW PUZZLE



The most absorbing puzzle seen for years. The kind you sit up half the night to do. The puzzle is to get both balls, one in each pocket. Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c. by mail, postpaid. **WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

JAPANESE TWIRLER



A wonderful imported paper novelty. By a simple manipulation of the wooden handles a number of beautiful figures can be produced. It takes on several combinations of magnificent colors. Price, 10c., postpaid. **WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

JAPANESE TRICK KNIFE



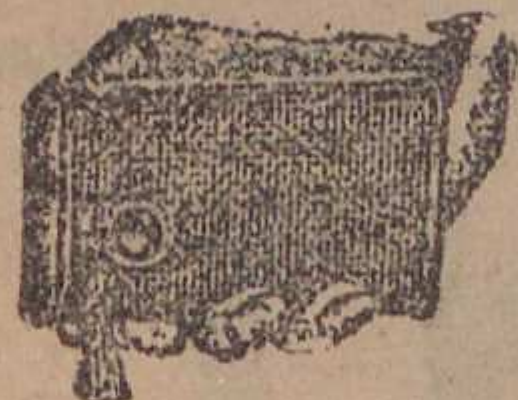
You can show the knife and instantly draw it across your finger, apparently cutting deep into the flesh. The red blood appears on the blade of the knife, giving a startling effect to the spectators. The knife is removed and the finger is found in good condition. Quite an effective illusion. Price 10c. each by mail. **FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.**

PICK-NE-OUT PUZZLE



The head is finished in black japan, and in the mouth is a highly polished steel ball. The puzzle is to pick out the ball. Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c. by mail, postpaid. **WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

POCKET FLASH LIGHT SQUIRT



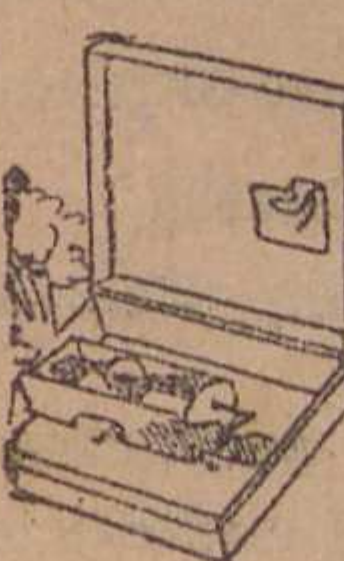
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It is made of a composition, exactly resembling a lighted cigar. The white ashes at the end and the imitation of tobacco-leaf being perfect. You can carelessly place it on top of the tablecloth or any other expensive piece of furniture, and await the result. After they see the joke everybody will have a good laugh. Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid; 3 for 25c. **C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.**

TRICK CIGARETTE BOX



This one is a corker! Get a box right away, if you want to have a barrel of joy. Here's the secret: It looks like an ordinary red box of Turkish cigarettes. But it contains a trigger, under which you place a paper cap. Offer your friend a smoke and he raises the lid of the box. That explodes the cap, and if you are wise you will get out of sight with the box before he gets over thinking he was shot. Price, 15c., postpaid. **H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.**

DUPLIX BICYCLE WHISTLE



This is a double whistle, producing loud but very rich, harmonious sounds, entirely different from ordinary whistles. It is just the thing for bicyclists or sportsmen, its peculiar double and resonant tones at once attracting attention. It is an imported whistle, handsomely nickel plated, and will be found a very useful and handy pocket companion. Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c.; one dozen, 75c., sent by mail, postpaid. **WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

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This genuine laugh producer is made of nicely colored cardboard. A sharp, bent hook is at the back to attach it to the lapel of your coat. Hide one hand under the lapel and twitch the small, black thread. It will cause a red tongue to dart in and out of the mouth in the most comical manner imaginable at the word of command. It is very mystifying, and never fails to produce a hearty laugh. Price, 6c. each by mail. **C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.**

THE INK BLOT JOKER



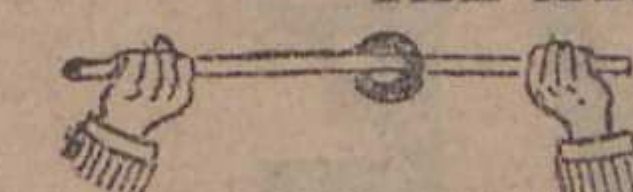
Fool Your Friends. —The greatest novelty of the age! Have a joke which makes everybody laugh. More fun than any other novelty that has been shown in years. Place it on a desk, tablecloth, or any piece of furniture, as shown in the above cut, near some valuable papers, or on fine wearing apparel. Watch the result! Oh, Gee! Price, 15c. each, postpaid. **C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.**

TRICK PURSE



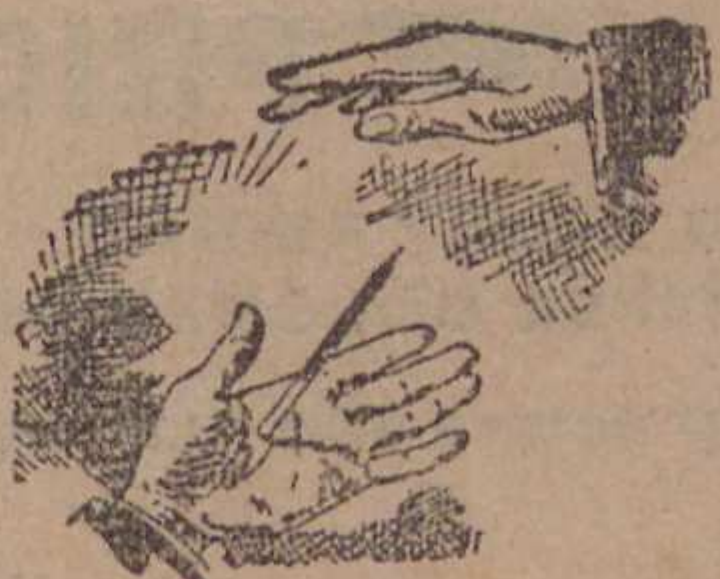
—The first attempt usually made to open it, is to press down the little knob in the centre of purse, when a small needle runs out and stabs them in the finger, but does not open it. You can open it before their eyes and still they will be unable to open it. Price by mail, postpaid, 25c. each. **WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

THE MYSTIC RING



A Brand-New Trick, Just Out.—Puzzling, Mystifying and Perplexing. A metal ring is handed around for examination, and is found to be solid, unbroken japanned iron. A cane, a pencil or a string is held tightly at each end by a spectator. The performer lightly taps the cane with the ring, and the ring suddenly is seen to be encircling the cane. How did the ring pass the spectator's two hands and get on the cane? The most mystifying trick ever invented. Others charge 75 cents for this trick; but our price, including instruction, is 12c., postpaid. **WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

RISEING PENCIL



—The performer exhibits an ordinary pencil and shows it top and bottom. The pencil is laid on the palm, the performer calling attention to his hypnotic power over innate objects. The pencil is seen slowly to rise, following the movements of the other hand. The witnesses are asked to pass their hand around it to assure themselves no thread or hair is used. Price, 25c. **C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.**

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A startling and pleasing illusion! "The ways of the world are devious," says Matthew Arnold, but the ways of the Lightning Trick Box when properly handled, are admitted to be puzzling and uncertain. You take off the lid and show your friends that it is full of nice candy. Replace the lid, when you can solemnly assure your friends that you can instantly empty the box in their presence without opening it; and taking off the lid again, sure enough the candy has disappeared. Or you can change the candy into a piece of money by following the directions sent with each box. This is the neatest and best cheap trick ever invented. Price, only 10c.; 3 for 25c., mail, postpaid. **C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.**

THE FINGER THROUGH THE HAT.

Having borrowed a hat from your friend, push your finger through the crown of it, and it is seen to move about. Though very amusing to others, the owner of the hat does not see the joke, but thinks it meanness to destroy his hat; yet when it is returned it is perfectly uninjured. Price, 10c. each by mail. **WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**



CRAWLING BUGS

These giant beetles are beautifully enameled in natural, brilliant colors. There is a roller underneath, actuated by hidden springs. When the roller is wound up the bug crawls about in the most life-like manner. Try one on the maid if you want to enjoy yourself. Price, 12c. each, by mail, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

THE MAGNETIC TOP.



A handsome metal, highly magnetized toy. A horseshoe and a spiral wire furnished with each top. When spun next to the wires, they make the most surprising movements. You can make wires of different shapes and get the most peculiar effects. Price, 5c., postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

THE JOKER'S CIGAR.

The biggest sell of the season. A real cigar made of tobacco, but secreted in the center of cigar about one-half inch from end is a fountain of sparklets. The moment the fire reaches this fountain hundreds of sparks of fire burst forth in every direction, to the astonishment of the smoker. The fire is stage fire, and will not burn the skin or clothing. After the fireworks the victim can continue smoking the cigar to the end. Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c.; 1 dozen, 90c., mailed, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

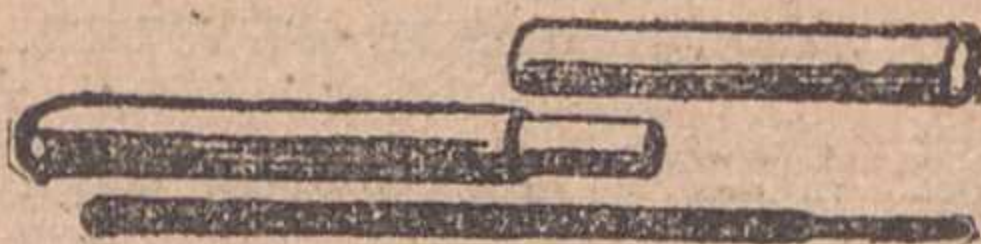
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The greatest trick joke out. A perfect imitation of a smouldering cigarette with bright red fire. It fools the wisest. Send 10c. and we will mail it. **WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

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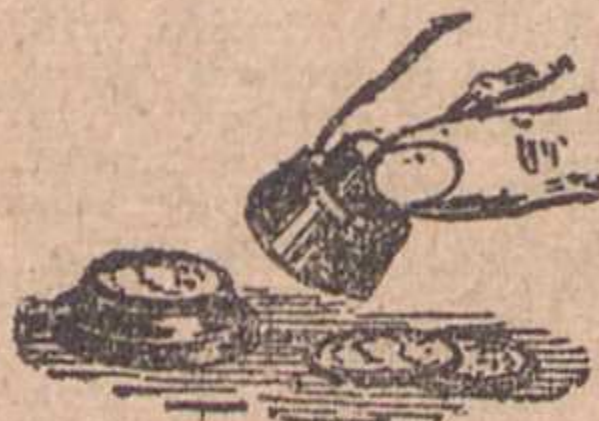


A magic little box in three parts that is very mystifying to those not in the trick. A coin placed on a piece of paper disappears by dropping a nickel ring around it from the magic box. Made of hard wood two inches in diameter. Price, 12c. **H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.**

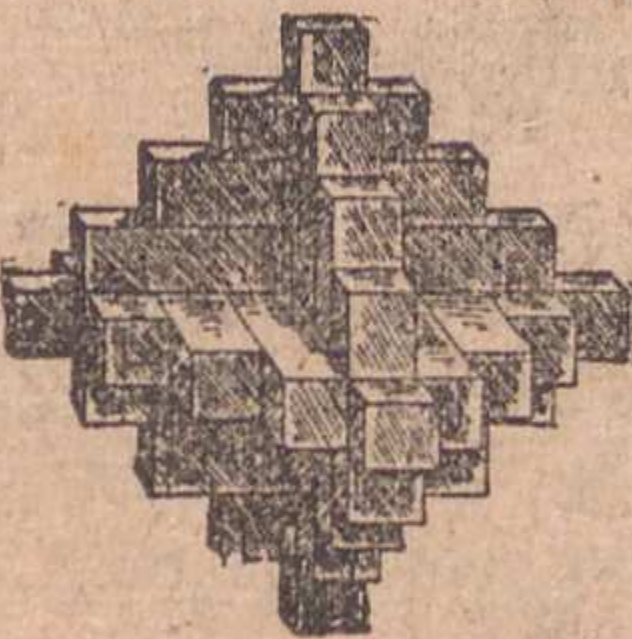


GLASS PEN.—Patent glass pen, with nice tip, writes like any ordinary pen; each put up in wooden box. Price, 10c., postpaid. **WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

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A mystifying and amusing trick. Tin blanks are placed under the little tin cup and apparently coined into dimes. A real money-maker. Price, 20c. **WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**



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This puzzle contains twenty-one pieces of wood nicely finished; take them apart and put them together same as illustrated. Everybody would like to try it, as it is very fascinating. Price, by mail, postpaid, 25c. each.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

FOUR WEEKS (A LOUD BOOK).



Has the absolute and exact shape of a book in cloth. Upon the opening of the book, after having it set up according to directions furnished, a loud report similar to that of a pistol-shot will be heard, much to the amazement and surprise of the victim. Caps not mailable; can be bought at any toy store. Price, 65c. by mail, postpaid. **WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.**

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The strangest toy on the market. They are made in Japan and look like a little red mandarin. Each manikin is furnished with a cartridge to which a pair of legs are attached. By making two pin-holes in the cartridge, attaching it to the figure, and immersing it in a glass of water the little figure will dart up and down for an hour like a real diver. Price, by mail, 25 cents each, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.



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Every boy who wants a whip-lash, pair of reins, or any other knitted article of similar kind should have a Knitter. Anybody can work it. The most beautiful designs can be made by using colored worsteds with this handy little object. It is handsomely lacquered, strongly made, and the wires are very durable.

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